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ABSTRACT

In an interdisciplinary study the role of the news media in environmental problems is examined. A description of the environmental problems of the San Francisco Bay Area and of the many news media which serve this area introduces this second volume of the study. The dimensions of the information explosion in the Bay Area news media are documented in quantitative terms. The study identifies the groups in the Bay Area which can be expected to use the information offered by the news media and the implications of this for the press. The difficulties for the press in reporting environmental deterioration and the damage caused by "environmental" advertising are pointed out. The study also examined: the difficulties of gaining access to information about the plans of public utilities; the interrelationship of a growing community and its newspapers and the possible effects of newspaper coverage of urban land use patterns; and the possibilities of getting along without the news media and becoming informed on one's own. The study concludes that the media have alerted the public to environmental hazards, but that continued efforts to pinpoint local problems will be necessary. For the extensive background study of the environmental problems of the Bay Area, see volume one of the study (EM009436). (JY)

MASS MEDIA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXPLOSION:
THE PRESS DISCOVERS THE ENVIRONMENT

VOLUME NO. 2

PROJECT DIRECTORS:
DAVID MARK RUBIN & DAVID PETER SACHS

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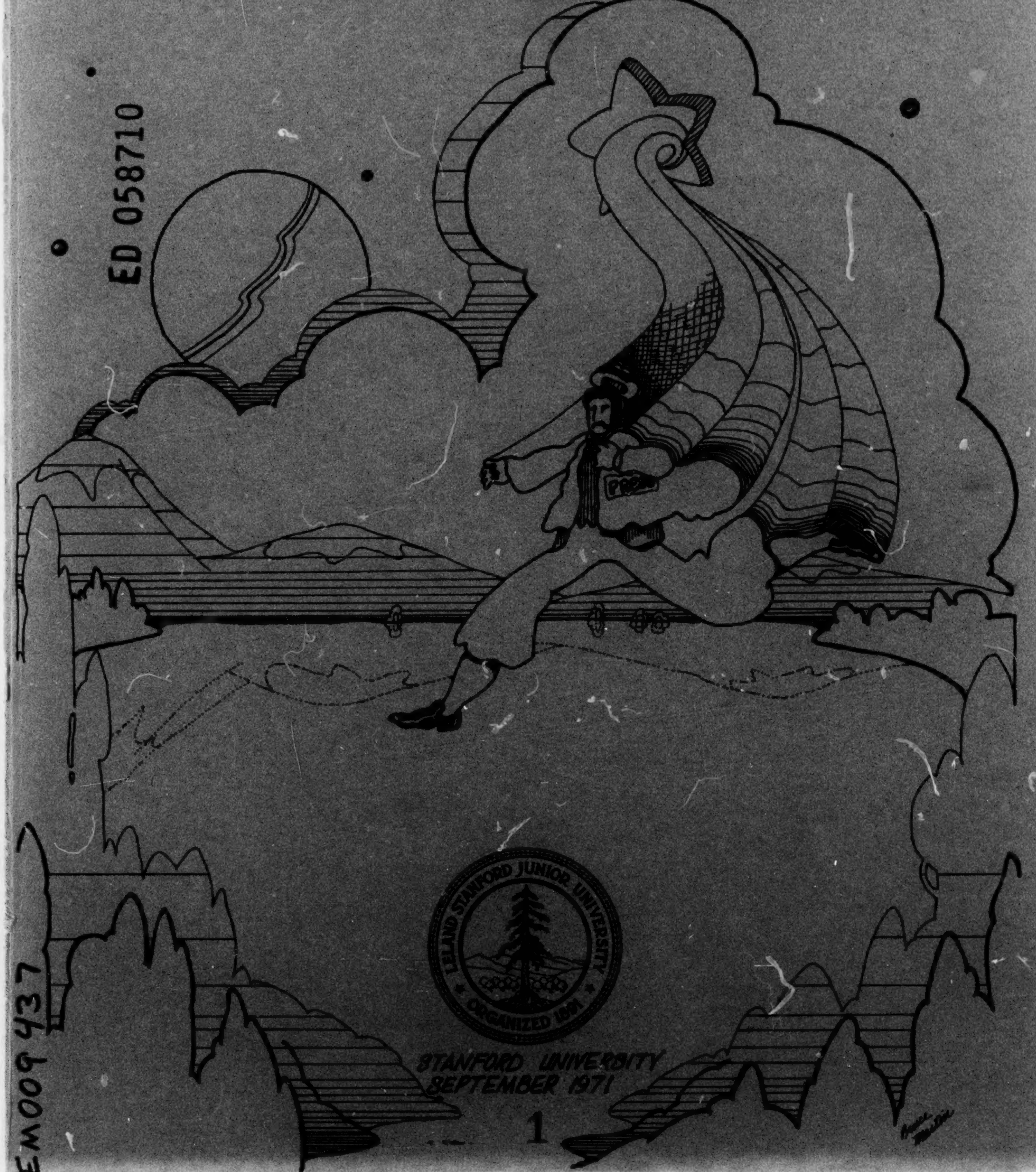

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 1971

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MASS MEDIA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

VOLUME II

THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXPLOSION: THE PRESS DISCOVERS THE ENVIRONMENT

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David Mark Rubin
David Peter Sachs

Project Directors

Stanford University
September, 1971

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PREFACE

This research project, on the general subject "Mass Media and the Environment," is unusual in three respects. First, it is an interdisciplinary project linking two fields–communication and medicine–which are not usual partners. Second, it is an experiment by the National Science Foundation in granting research funds directly to graduate students and permitting them to oversee a research project without direct faculty supervision. And third, while it is in part an assessment and critique of media performance, both disciplines offer much information which, we hope, can be put to use immediately by the press and concerned public to help solve environmental problems.

For their faith we would like to thank Miss Joan Callanan of the National Science Foundation and Fred Honkala (formerly with the Foundation and now President of Yankton College in South Dakota). For their sponsorship and guidance we thank Profs. William Rivers (Communication) and Joshua Lederberg (Genetics), and Niels Reimers and Frank Newman of Stanford's grant administration office. And for their devotion to the project we thank all the Stanford students–and their wives and husbands–who worked long hours to bring it to a successful conclusion.

David M. Rubin
David P. Sachs

Stanford University
10 September 1971

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In compiling this report, we frequently resorted to research techniques which can only be compared to the Chinese water torture in their effects on the unfortunate victims. Literally hundreds of working journalists in and out of the Bay Area cheerfully submitted to our mail questionnaires, telephone interviews, requests for information and access to files, and various other tools of the trade. To all our deepest thanks, particularly to the following Bay Area journalists, all of whom cannot be blamed if they never want to hear the word "environment" again:

Robert Burgess (Palo Alto *Times*
Chet Casselman (KSFO-radio)
Ken Castle (Fremont *Argus*)
George Dusheck (KQED-TV)
Paul Finch (San Francisco Associated Press
Skip Garretson (Oakland *Tribune*)
Jeff Grigsby (San Francisco United Press International)
Gil Haar (KNEW-radio)
Don Harness (KNTV-TV)
Jerry Johnson (KGO-TV)
Harry Martin (Contra Costa *Times*, now with the Napa *Register*)
David Perlman (San Francisco *Chronicle*)
Ken Rowe (Redwood City *Tribune*)
Heidi Schulman (KCBS-radio)
John Stanton (Palo Alto *Times*)
Ben Williams (KPIX-TV)

And special thanks to Tom Harris of the San Jose *Mercury*, who should be awarded some sort of medal for bravery in the face of academicians.

David M. Rubin
September 10, 1971

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Although this volume has been edited as a single product, it represents 14 months of dedicated work by 15 individuals from the Stanford Department of Communication and two from Sacramento State College. The following vitae are provided for readers curious about the identities behind our anonymous third person, and for those who may wish to assign praise or blame for work in specific chapters.

DAVID M. RUBIN: Project Director and Co-Principal Investigator. (B.A. Columbia '67; M.A. Stanford '68). A former director of Columbia's WKCR-FM in New York, Mr. Rubin has also worked for the Cleveland *Plain-Dealer,* Elyria (Ohio) *Chronicle-Telegram* (on a *Wall Street Journal* Newspaper Fund Scholarship), and the San Francisco *Chronicle* (as Stanford stringer for the Sporting Green). He has published in *Columbia Journalism Review* and *California Newspaper Publisher,* and he is co-author with Stanford Professor William L. Rivers of *A Region's Press,* a critical look at the Bay Area's newspapers. He is currently authoring a mass media introductory textbook for Prentice-Hall with Peter M. Sandman and David B. Sachsman (see below). He will be an assistant professor in the Journalism Department at New York University (Washington Square) in 1971-72. He contributed the material in Chapter VI on public utilities, nuclear power and the press, which is a part of his dissertation for the doctorate.

DAVID P. SACHS: Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director for Volume I (B.A. Carleton '67). Mr. Sachs' interest in the environment began in 1958 when he built a plexiglass, working model of a water pollution control plant. He has since worked to develop a chemical method for removing synthetic detergents from water supplies, and in the area of molecular genetics. In 1964 he won an award from Eastman Kodak for a 16 mm. film on the insect world. He has published in *McCall's* and *Saturday Review*, and has taught numerous special seminars at Stanford on urban problems. In 1971-72 he will finish the five-year medical program at Stanford prior to internship and a career in environmental medicine. In addition to his academic pursuits, he is an accomplished French horn and organ player.

DAVID W. JONES, JR. (B.A. Yale '66; M.A. Northwestern '67). Mr. Jones is a specialist in urban problems and politics and was adviser on environmental issues to Stuart McLean in his 1970 Congressional campaign. He was publisher of *Cross Currents*, an irregular journal of news and opinion in Palo Alto, and he has taught journalism at both Stanford and Hayward State College. He will spend the 1971-72 academic year at Stanford doing research with Prof. Edwin Parker on communication substitutes for transportation. He contributed the material in Chapter VII on the growth establishment and the San Jose press.

DAVID B. SACHSMAN (B.A. Pennsylvania '67; M.A. Stanford '68). For the past two years Mr. Sachsman has been an assistant professor of journalism at Hayward State College in addition to his studies at Stanford. He has worked for the student newspaper at Pennsylvania and the New York *Daily News,* and he has published in *Journalism Quarterly*. He will spend the 1971-72 academic year at the Division of Urban Studies and Community Development, Livingston College, Rutgers University, as assistant professor. He contributed the material in Chapter IV on the influence of public relations materials on the press, which is a part of his dissertation for the doctorate.

PETER M. SANDMAN (B.A. Princeton '67; M.A. Stanford '68). Mr. Sandman is a successful freelance writer who has worked, during his time at Stanford, for *Look, Reader's Digest,* and *Playboy.* He has published 13 books, including *The Unabashed Career Guide* and *Where the Girls Are.* In 1971-72 he will be an assistant professor in the School of Journalism at Ohio State University. He contributed the material in Chapter IV on the media's unwillingness to name names in environmental reporting, and the material in Chapter V on environmental advertising, which is a part of his dissertation for the doctorate.

CHARLENE J. BROWN (B.A. Stanford '65). Ms. Brown is a student in the Public Affairs Ph.D. program at Stanford. As of January, 1972 she will teach journalism and work toward her Ph.D. at Indiana University, where her husband will be an assistant professor. She contributed to the formulation of the operational definition of "environmental news" as outlined in Chapter II.

WEB DEHOFF, JR. (B.A. Washington and Lee '70). Mr. DeHoff has been working toward his M.A. in communication at Stanford and plans to spend 1971-72 traveling. He contributed the material on the telephone survey of Sierra Club members in Chapter III and aided Mr. Jones in his research on the growth establishment and the San Jose press.

LAVERNE DICKINSON (B.A. Texas '70). Ms. Dickinson has been in the M.A. program in communication at Stanford and is presently a reporter on the weekly newspaper in Pt. Reyes, California. She intends to remain a working journalist. She contributed the material on getting along without the news media in Chapter VIII and is looking for a library to which she can donate her massive collection of documents on the California Water Plan.

PHIL GARON (B.A. Rice '68). At Rice Mr. Garon was editor of the campus newspaper. Before entering the Stanford Ph.D. program in communication, he covered state politics in Texas for UPI. He will continue work on his Ph.D. in 1971-72. He contributed the material in Chapter IV on coverage of the Groth Report and the problems with the press conference as a communication tool.

RAE GOODELL (B.A. Pomona '67, M.A. Stanford '71). Ms. Goodell, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Afghanistan, has worked for the Claremont *Courier* and intends to become an environmental and science reporter. She will be finishing her Doctoral work at Stanford in 1971-72. She contributed the material in Chapter I on who reports environmental news in the Bay Area.

MARILYN HUNTSBERGER (B.A. Stanford '69). Ms. Huntsberger has been in the M.A. program in journalism at Stanford and intends to do magazine editing and feature writing in San Francisco or New England. She has been employed by the Commission on MIT Education. She contributed a portion of the material in Chapter IV on coverage of the California Water Plan.

PETER LINTON (B.A. Dartmouth '70). An accomplished soccer player, Mr. Linton has been in the journalism M.A. program at Stanford. He hopes to work as a correspondent and travel in Europe before becoming a working journalist in the United States. He contributed a portion of the material in Chapter IV on coverage of the California Water Plan, and aided Mr. Sandman in his research on environmental advertising.

DEBBIE MAJTELES (B.A. University of California, Berkeley '70). Ms. Majteles has been in the journalism M.A. program at Stanford and intends to do some freelance writing in 1971-72. She contributed the material in Chapter II on the environmental information explosion at the *Chronicle*.

LEONARD SELLERS (B.A. San Francisco State '70). A three-time Hearst award winner and SDX outstanding journalism graduate, Mr. Sellers is enrolled in the Ph.D. program in communication at Stanford. He has worked extensively for the wire services and intends to teach. He contributed the material in Chapter II on wire service coverage of environmental news; coverage of regularly scheduled meetings of governmental bodies with environmental expertise; the material in Chapter III on the information seeking habits of Sierra Club members; and aided Mr. Rubin in his research on coverage of public utilities and nuclear power.

CAROL SISCO (A.A. Sacramento City College '70). Now an undergraduate at Sacramento State College, Ms. Sisco hopes to work for a newspaper in England upon graduation. Under the guidance of Prof. William Dorman she provided a portion of the material in Chapter IV on the problems of covering environmental bills.

ROBERT VINING (B.A. Tulane '70). Mr. Vining has been enrolled in the journalism M.A. program at Stanford, and is unsure of his plans for the coming year. He contributed a portion of the material in Chapter IV on coverage of the California Water Plan.

RAY WORSLEY (Undergraduate at Sacramento State College). Mr. Worsley will work for the student newspaper at SSC in 1971-72 and hopes to attend graduate school in political science. Under the guidance of Prof. William Dorman he provided a portion of the material in Chapter IV on the problems of covering environmental bills.

Special recognition is due two other participants who made important contributions to this project. **LYNDA WEISBERG** served as project secretary and provided excellent research material on a number of points. She has an excellent background in biology, political science and the media, and now intends to enter law school. In the midst of everything she found time to help organize a union of Stanford employees. **MARTHA PRESS** served as editor of Volume II, weaving together the many disparate parts of the research. She is a former newspaper woman and advertising copy writer, married to Harry Press, editor of the Stanford *Observer*. She lives in Palo Alto and is a freelance editor.

INTRODUCTION

Within the past two years, most Americans have been caught up in the latest of the cyclical awakenings which sweep the country from time to time, forcing new directions in thought. In the 1950's the national spotlight fell on the cold war and the communist menace; in the 1960's attention was focused on the divisions between black and white in American society. Now to these two problems (neither of which has been solved) has been added a third concern for the seventies: the deterioration of our environment.

One trait shared by all three problems is its intimate relationship with the mass media. The emphasis on monolithic communism was accompanied by the media's difficulty in reporting Mao's victory in China and the accusations of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy. Unquestionably, media performance in reporting these two events had much to do with shaping the thinking of millions of Americans who depended on the mass media for most, if not all, of their information on communism. Similarly, the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders devoted a chapter in its definitive, 1968 report on racism in America to media performance, noting deficiencies and offering new directions and goals. The Commission concluded that one reason for American racial difficulties was that the media had "failed to analyze and report adequately on racial problems in the United States and, as a related matter, to meet the Negro's legitimate expectations in journalism."

While it is still too early in the environmental movement to recognize the equivalent of the Birmingham civil rights marches, or Senator Joe-speeches, the media's importance has already been felt. The national, to-build-or-not-to-build debate over the Supersonic Transport Plane, which the media selected for massive coverage, helped to diseducate the public on the righteousness of American technology and the scientific Establishment, and on the "bigger is better," "growth for growth's sake" notion of progress. It is impossible to tell precisely what the impact of coverage of the Santa Barbara oil slick or the death of Lake Erie has been nationally, except to say that these events have become well known and are an important part of the groundwork in the concern for the environment. From all indications, environmental protection will be an important issue in the 1972 political campaigns (it was not in 1968), and the media will be forced to devote attention to problems of air and water pollution, overpopulation, recycling, energy use, and urban sprawl.

Traditional press theory has quite a bit to say about the role of the media in reporting such important issues. Since publication in 1947 of the Hutchins Commission report entitled *A Free and Responsible Press,* it has become generally accepted by editors, reporters, and civil servants alike that the public has a "right to know" the activities of its elected and appointed officials. Public servants have become bred to this notion through the myriad open record and open meeting statutes which exist at all levels of government. While it is true that important decisions of a public nature are still made in the steam rooms of private clubs, participants in such deals are aware that they are flouting the intent of access legislation.

But such openness also puts a special responsibility on the press. As the eyes and ears for a large segment of the community (certainly for all those who remain politically unorganized), the press must also bring meaning to open record and open meeting legislation by reporting the contents of important documents and the proceedings of key meetings. This obligation has been institutionalized through a number of useful catch-phrases to describe the modern role of the news media: the "watchdog" press; the "fourth branch of government"; an "adversary" press; and a "socially responsible" press. According to the Hutchins Commission, the socially responsible news medium should, among other virtues, provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; and provide full access to the day's intelligence. At stake is the difference between an informed and an uninformed electorate–with all the implications for democratic self-government.

It was with this orientation toward the role of the press–certainly not a radical approach–that we first considered studying the news media and the deterioration of the environment. It is difficult to think of a subject more complicated for the news media to report, involving as it does a systems approach to problems and a recognition of the inter-relatedness of all things. It is a subject from which almost no activity can be excluded, from the obvious industrial pollution of water and air, to less obvious decisions by local zoning boards, to the seemingly insignificant decision by a homeowner as to which fuel to use for heating. Complicating this still further for the news media is that 1) They are dependent for revenues on the very industries guilty of much of the pollution; 2) Private businesses do not feel the same obligations to make public their activities and decisions that government does; 3) Decisions with environmental consequences often involve complex scientific, economic, and political factors which much of the public and press cannot grasp; 4) There are rarely specific news pegs on which to hang environmental stories, with significant stories evolving slowly over a period of years; and 5) Most environmental stories are simply not "sexy"–they don't sell very well.

In addition, while the Hutchins Commission and succeeding press critics have laid out some valuable, broad goals, no one has come up with a useful set of specific standards or criteria by which to judge press performance on any issue more complex than election coverage, and the yardstick for this often boils down to simple column-inch measurement. What can we expect from the news media in reporting this latest crisis? What role have they played so far in popularizing environmental information and bringing about improvements?

The Kerner Commission report with its criticism of the media's handling of the racial question came in the wake of urban rioting, rather late in the history of deteriorating black-white relations. We have attempted in this volume, with the generous support of the National Science Foundation, to answer some of these questions about the news media and the environmental crisis while there is still time for change and adaptation.

This is one of three volumes to come from an interdisciplinary study carried out by members of the Stanford University Department of Communication, the Stanford University School of Medicine, and students in genetics, biology, and physics. All research was done from summer 1970 through summer 1971, and some three dozen people were involved. Companion volumes present: 1) A description of the San Francisco Bay Area's water system and an analysis of the effects of the California Water Plan; and 2) An annotated "telephone book" of information sources (for use of the press and public) on selected environmental subjects of importance in the Bay Area.

This volume addresses itself to a number of media topics. Chapter One provides a description of Bay Area environmental problems and the citizenry which must cope with these problems; plus a broad look at the many news media in the Area which, potentially, are sources of information on the deteriorating quality of the environment. Chapter Two documents the dimensions of the environmental information explosion in

Bay Area news media in purely quantitative terms. Chapter Three explores which groups in the Bay Area can be expected to use the information offered by the news media, and which do not—and the implications of this for the press.

Chapter Four points up some of the difficulties for the press in reporting environmental deterioration: the institutional biases of the wire services (the backbone of all news coverage); dependence on the press on the environmental pseudo-event for the necessary news peg; the necessity of providing specific names of polluters, and why the press does not; the public relations establishment, which attempts to manipulate environmental coverage; and the problems of covering the machinations surrounding passage or defeat of environmental legislation. Chapter Five assesses the damage done to society by environmental advertisements, and offers the media a prescription for curbing the excesses of ad campaigns such as that for Chevron F-310, the gasoline additive.

Chapter Six looks at the difficulties of gaining access to information about the plans of public utilities, particularly information on the siting and construction of nuclear power plants; and it offers an assessment of coverage of three sitings in Northern California. Chapter Seven examines the interrelationship of a growing community and its newspaper and the possible effects of newspaper coverage on urban land use patterns; San Jose is used as a case study. Chapter Eight describes the possibilities of getting along without the news media and becoming informed, on one's own, about the California Water Plan. And Chapter Nine offers some conclusions, recommendations, and lamentations.

In the past year and one half alone, while this study was being conducted, the Nation's news media had to report the discovery of dangerous levels of mercury in tuna and swordfish; the potential environmental impact of the SST and the trans-Alaska oil pipeline; the dangers of noise pollution for those unfortunate enough to live beneath airport approach patterns; potential damage to marine environments caused by the heating of water used for cooling electric generating plants; fraudulent and misleading environmental advertising by Standard Oil of California, Potlatch Forests, Inc., Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and numerous other corporate giants; and the decay of hundreds of central business districts and inner-city living areas. The deterioration of the environment has burst upon the media with the suddenness of Watts, Newark, and Detroit. We hope that this study will aid the news media in reporting what could be the last great crisis to face the Nation.

David M. Rubin
Stanford University
September 10, 1971

Chapter One

THE PROBLEMS AND THE REPORTERS: AN OVERVIEW

The performance of a newspaper, magazine, or broadcast station cannot, and should not, be judged apart from its audience and the community it serves. As so many newspaper executives (outside New York) are fond of saying, "Our city wouldn't support a New York *Times*–that's not the kind of paper we need here." Without arguing the merits of this statement, it is true that every news medium serves a different community with different problems. In addition, news executives and reporters, both broadcast and print, generally believe it is their function to *follow* community desires in their news offerings, rather than break new ground and act as an *educator* of the audience. This was found time and again in our survey of Bay Area reporters and news executives (see below). Most believed the environmental information explosion was the result of community pressure and the expressed needs of the audience. The explosion did not come from any sense of mission on the part of the news media.

That being the case, we feel it essential to devote some attention, as a prelude, to a description of those environmental problems which concern Northern Californians, and to the people who make up the audience for news in this geographic area. (Our research was loosely confined to the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, which includes such metropolitan centers as San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose, and the smaller Santa Rosa, Vallejo, San Mateo, Berkeley, and other cities. The designated counties are San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Solano. In a few instances, especially in our investigation of coverage of nuclear power plant siting, we ranged as far south as Santa Cruz and as far north as Sacramento, the State Capital.)

As befits an area which owes its spectacular beauty to the meeting of land and water, the two major environmental concerns of Northern Californians are protecting the integrity of the coastline and San Francisco Bay. Almost all environmental battles between conservationists and developers in Northern California are somehow connected to one or both of these concerns.

For example, the California State Legislature in its 1971 session has been hammering out a bill which will "zone" the coastline and offer some protection against tract housing and industrial development on this scarce and valuable resource. The Bay Conservation and Development Commission is charged with implementing its comprehensive plan which has halted the filling of San Francisco Bay for non-water related purposes. This became a necessity because, by 1958, the 680 square miles of the Bay had been reduced through fill to 437 square miles, and since that date, concern for keeping the Bay a bay has been of the highest priority.

Implementation of the various projects which make up the multi-billion dollar California Water Plan is a third area of potential environmental aggression. In broad terms, California is a state of water imbalance: the North is water-rich, and the south is water-poor; but a majority of the people and a sizable number of large farmer-landowners live in the Southern part of the state, or on the route to it. Thus the California Water Plan was devised throughout the 1950's to transport water from north to south to aid landowners in the San Joaquin Valley and city dwellers (and future city dwellers) of the Los Angeles-San Diego area. Full implementation of the Plan, many northerners fear, will cause grievous harm to

San Francisco Bay through the drying up of the Southernmost portions of the Bay and the change in the point of salt water-fresh water mix. (The nature and effects of the California Water Plan are discussed in detail in Volume I of this report.)

A fourth major concern is over location of electric power plants. The State's powerful private utilities–Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas and Electric–intend to construct nuclear power plants, which, for economic reasons related to cooling technology, they feel must be located on the scenic California coastline. The construction of from a half-dozen to a dozen new nuclear plants by 1990 has produced fears that water used to cool the plants will be raised to unacceptable temperatures when it is returned to the source (whether it be the ocean, a bay, or a river); that the plants may not be safe from rupture in case of earthquake (the coastal zone being laced with fault zones); and that the plants will be aesthetically unacceptable on open coastal beach.

To decisionmakers in Northern California, the environment has become a legitimate and important political issue. If environmentalists are still viewed by politicians in other parts of the country as backpacking birdwatchers with little political clout, this is not the case in the Bay Area. An active minority has followed the progress of all the above plans and has often intervened to halt what it feels to be an insult to the environment. A few of the many instances will serve to show how politically active, and potent, the conservationist lobby is in the Bay Area.

The most famous example is the creation and preservation of the above-mentioned Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). The Save San Francisco Bay Association, which in 1964 pressed for creation of the San Francisco Bay Conservation Study Commission (which recommended formation of the BCDC), was a result of efforts by Mrs. Clark Kerr, Sylvia McLaughlin, Esther Gulick, and Don Sherwood. In 1969 the State Legislature had to decide whether or not to put the BCDC on a permanent footing and enact its *San Francisco Bay Plan,* which would halt speculative land fill and real estate development in the Bay. The Sierra Club, the San Francisco Planning and Conservation League, Save the Bay Association and the Save Our Bay Action Committee, the Stanford Conservation Group, and dozens of other citizen organizations bound together for a massive lobbying effort to force the Legislature to pass a strong bill protecting the Bay. The Save Our Bay Action Committee blitzed shopping centers and train stations in the home area of San Mateo State Senator Richard Dolwig (a friend of the bay fill constituency) in a successful effort to make him more responsive to the people's wishes. Petitions were circulated, bus-loads of citizens went up to Sacramento to attend hearings on the BCDC bills and buttonhole their representatives, full-page newspaper ads were purchased to explain the fight between fillers and conservationists and the positions of various Senators, and 37,000 "Save Our Bay" bumper stickers were thrown into the fray. The citizens' lobbying efforts paid off in the end, as a strong bill was produced and signed into law. It would not have been possible without this strong outpouring of local activism.

Beginning in 1958, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company began to lay plans to construct a nuclear power plant at scenic Bodega Head in Sonoma County. The utility worked quietly, romancing the local Board of Supervisors and chamber of commerce members, who were attracted by the tax money the plant would bring to the county. Not so enchanted were a group of Sonoma County and San Francisco residents who felt that the plant would desecrate a rugged, wild headland location, open the risk of radiation leak through a plant accident caused by an earthquake, and make the site unusable for a

University of California marine station because of the effects of thermal pollution. San Francisco attorney David Pesonen, Rose Gaffney, owner of the Bodega land, author Harold Gilliam, conservationist Karl Kortum, Dr. Ned Chapin, and attorney C. Lennart Cedarborg fought the utility at a series of public hearings held by the Army Corps of Engineers and the State Public Utilities Commission. They were able to bring sufficient pressure on the utility that when, in 1964, the Atomic Energy Commission expressed reservations about construction of the plant so near the San Andreas Fault, PG&E withdrew its application for a construction permit and abandoned the site. This was the earliest successful challenge to a nuclear power plant in the country.

In April, 1970 a group of citizens in Santa Cruz, led by Dorothy Cope, Henry Faitz, Eleanor Galiardi, Supervisor Phil Harry, and others organized to fight location of another PG&E nuclear plant on El Jarro point in Davenport. The group has sponsored two community forums at which the pros and cons of nuclear plants were discussed, and they are seeking a local voice in the siting of any plant in Santa Cruz County. Members of the Sierra Club have also tried to intervene with the State Power Plant Siting Committee, which passes on the environmental acceptability of all plant sitings. This battle is as yet undecided.

San Francisco dressmaker Alvin Duskin has led two important fights against high-rise construction in the City. He was instrumental in beating back an attempt by the U.S. Steel Company to construct a high rise office and commercial business project on an old pier, which would have called for more Bay fill, the blocking of views of the Bay Bridge, traffic congestion in the wharf area, and other problems. Duskin also spearheaded a successful petition drive which has placed on the ballot in 1972 a measure which would halt *all* high-rise construction in the City over six stories without special building-by-building approval.

In 1970 a group of militant conservationists demanded from the officers of the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District (the only such regional district in the State) the names of the most serious air polluters in the Bay Area, and the tonnages of pollutants they turn out. This represented the first chink in the armor of secrecy surrounding individual industrial polluters.

Marin residents can thank the efforts of Carolyn Livermore for the banning of highway billboards in the county, to the continuing pleasure of drivers and residents. A Stanford University group has pressured the Stanford Administration on the question of open space versus continued industrial park development and high cost housing. A group of wealthy Kentfield women physically sought to block an Army Corps of Engineers team from changing the character of a stream in that community. (The conservationists lost that one: most of the magnificent trees are gone, and a concrete ditch is at this moment being built in the name of flood control.

(There have been other setbacks. Californians voted in the fall of 1970 on a measure which would permit some of the gasoline tax revenue, now frozen into the State Constitution to be used only for highways, to be diverted for rapid transit. The oil companies, road builders, and the California State Automobile Association poured money into a campaign against that idea, and the proposition was defeated. And the Transamerica pyramid, a multi-stored office building on the edge of San Francisco's North Beach and Chinatown, is being built, even though the outcry against it was as impassioned as that against the U.S. Steel project.)

The environmental activism of Bay Area residents is also borne out by membership figures in the Sierra Club, an important national organization which has done much important political lobbying on behalf of various projects in recent years. Nationally the Club has grown from under 45,000 members in 1966 to 114,000 in 1970. Of this total, 39,000 members live in the Bay Area alone (the Bay and Loma Prieta chapters), and another 14,000 comprise the Angeles (Los Angeles) chapter. By comparison, the Atlantic chapter, biggest outside California, which takes in the states of Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, has only 10,000 members; the entire Ohio chapter has but 1,800 members; the Lone Star (Texas) chapter 1,100; the North Star (Minnesota) chapter 1,600; and the Pacific Northwest chapter (which includes Oregon, Washington, and parts of Canada) 3,200. (Figures 1 and 2 show the yearly growth in membership of the California chapters of the Sierra Club as compared to growth of chapters in other parts of the country.)

Not only is there an active Sierra Club membership, but the Save Our Bay Action Committee can draw on a list of 7,000 members to mobilize for a political fight; and the Save Our Foothills group (which is active in the South Bay Area) has an active list of 3,000. To a certain extent these groups can avoid a dependence on the mass media for intragroup communication and can mobilize on their own, much as the business community has always been able to do.

It is a pointless exercise to say that Bay Area residents are *more* environmentally conscious than citizens in other parts of the country. (Eugene, Oregon voters in May, 1970 rejected construction of a nuclear power plant in that area in a referendum; and the governor of that state recently went on record as encouraging tourism but *discouraging* immigration to Oregon. This is a sentiment not likely to be echoed by California's present governor.) But the Bay Area does have an environment of unique quality which private citizens have shown a great willingness to protect with their time, checkbooks and, on occasion, their bodies. The Bay Area has a do-it-yourself political atmosphere that is unknown in other urban areas, and that is crucial to counter-balancing the plans of the "growth lobby." Its citizens have learned the virtues of organized political lobbying, and they are able to mobilize for a fight on important environmental issues.

Given this demonstrated activism and interest on the part of the citizenry, what sorts of news media serve this area?

There are in the nine-county Bay Area 40 reporters, representing nearly two-thirds of the daily news media, who regularly devote some of their time to environmental subjects.* Slightly less than half of them fall into a "high group"–those who spend 26 percent of more of their time on covering environment. In general, it is the reporter in this high group who views himself as having an environment beat.

(And there are some major discrepancies. David McQueen of KSAN radio says environment stories are spread throughout his staff of three people in general, while his reporter, Peter Laufer, says he spends 76-100 percent of his time on such stories, and has an environment beat. A similar situation exists at

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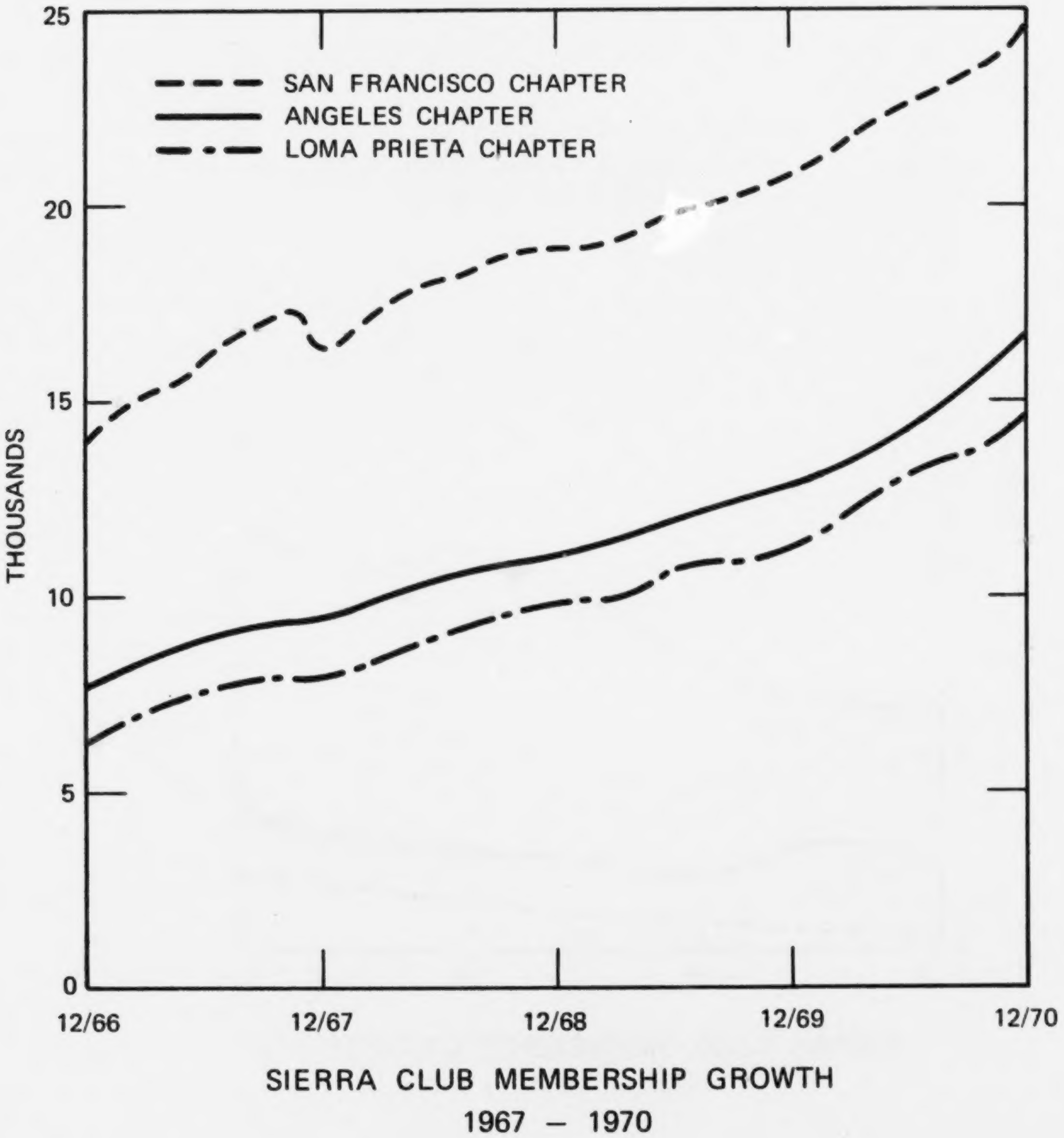
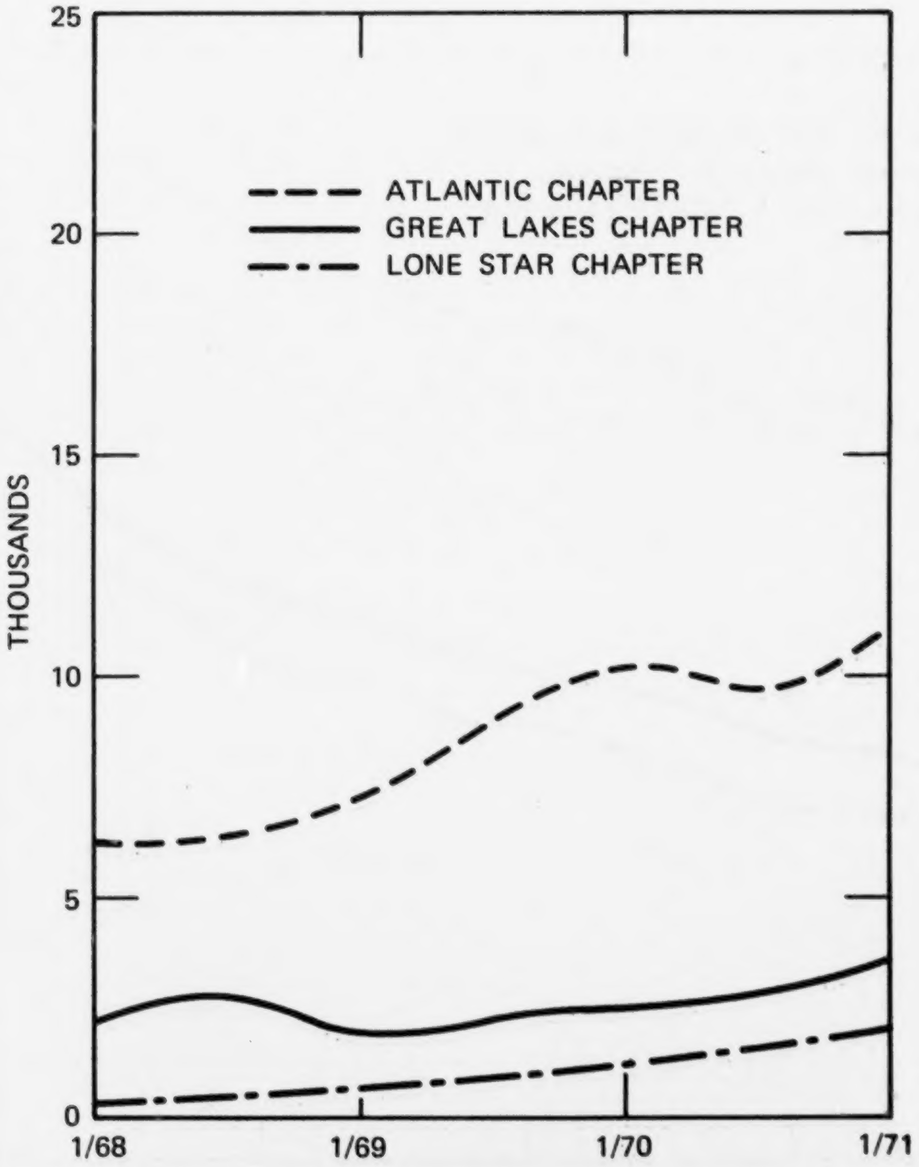
*These figures, and the following information in this chapter, were compiled through a personal interview survey and mail questionnaire in October 1970. A description of the mechanics of the survey, and copies of the questionnaires are included in Appendix I.



SIERRA CLUB MEMBERSHIP GROWTH
1967 – 1970

Figure 1



SIERRA CLUB MEMBERSHIP GROWTH
1968 – 1971

Figure 2

the San Rafael *Independent-Journal,* where Paul Peterzell is a well-known environment writer. The reverse occurs at KQED, where Mel Wax estimates his reporter's environment time as 76-100 percent, and the reporter, George Dusheck, calls it 1-25 percent.)

A list of environment reporters in the Bay Area has been compiled as Table I. It corresponds roughly to the "high group," but does take into account editor-reporter discrepancies. It also includes two separate notations: 1) science reporters actively covering environment, and 2) general reporters covering environment less than 25 percent of the time who can nonetheless be considered to have an environment beat by virtue of their attitude, and their editor's, toward their job.

Broadcasting is poorly represented: there are no radio stations on the main list, and KNBR, KFRC, KPFA, KSFO, and KGO are missing altogether. And, while the commercial VHF television stations all say they have environment reporters, none except Peter Giddings of KGO qualifies for the final list.

The major metropolitan dailies are all included in the list, and the weeklies are proportionately well represented. The group which is notably absent is the medium-sized dailies, those with circulations of about 30,000 to 50,000. Only one of these papers, the San Rafael *Independent-Journal,* has an environment reporter. The Santa Rosa *Press Democrat,* San Mateo *Times,* Richmond *Independent,* and Hayward *Review* have no one who qualifies.

The reporters in Table I do not differ statistically from the rest in their opinions on the quality of media coverage of environment, or in any other related views. The one striking difference is that the high group tends to have higher levels of education, with a greater proportion having been to graduate school. And, as would be expected, fewer of those in the high group also have general beats.

Two things stand out about environment reporters as a whole. First of all, over half were acquired by their organizations in the last year, after it became apparent that environment was a major news issue. This seems to support the newsmen's own feeling that the media follow rather than lead public opinion.

Second, almost all the environment reporters came from within; they were not hired specifically for the job. Typically they covered more and more environment-related stories, until a beat was established. In almost half the cases, the beat grew out of a political beat–regional, city, state government–which included meetings of agencies like the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District.

In few cases has an environment beat stemmed from a science beat. Only 14 percent of the reporters had covered science beats; nine percent had been science majors; George Dusheck of KQED says he flunked physics. Environment reporting seems to have attracted those with an interest in the workings of government, sometimes in the great outdoors, but seldom in science and technology *per se.*

Coverage might be expected, then, to emphasize government decisions being made about environment more than technical aspects of the problem. Dusheck has said that he often does not understand the technical information he passes on this viewers. Coverage of the scientists' findings about the nature and extent of pollution could be expected to have the traditional problems of science reporting: oversimplification, overemphasis on the dramatic, lack of interpretation.

The organizations which do not have specialists usually imply that they don't need one–there aren't enough local stories to justify a specialist, or the subject can be handled as well by general assignment reporters. They don't feel the subject of environment warrants a separate beat, either because

Table I

ENVIRONMENT REPORTERS IN THE BAY AREA

Reporter	Editor	Organization	Type of Organization	Circulation Size
Selina Bendix	M. H. Segal	Richmond *Freedom News*	weekly	7,500
Ken Castle	Ralph Fairchild	Fremont *Argus*	daily	8,413
Al Cline	Gale Cook	San Francisco *Examiner*	daily	203,026
George Dusheck	Mel Wax	KQED	TV	VHF Educational
Fred Garretson	Roy Grimm	Oakland *Tribune*	daily	207,609
Peter Giddings	Pat Polillo	KGO	TV	ABC-owned
Harold Gilliam	Richard Demorest	This World, Sunday *Chronicle* magazine	weekly	681,730
Tom Harris	Ben Hitt	San Jose *Mercury* and *News*	daily	211,552
John Hart	Stephan McNamara	Pacific *Sun*	weekly	11,533
Bob Jones	Bruce Brugmann	San Francisco *Bay Guardian*	monthly	20,000
Michael Lucas	Ken Brown	Fairfield *Daily Republic*	daily	11,442
Paul Peterzell	Bob Strebeigh	San Rafael *Independent-Journal*	daily	41,002
Justin Roberts	Richard Davis	Contra Costa *Times* and *Green Sheet*	daily	27,925
Scott Thurber	Abe Mellinkoff	San Francisco *Chronicle*	daily	478,704
Science reporters active in covering environment:				
David Perlman	Abe Mellinkoff	San Francisco *Chronicle*	daily	478,704
Ken Rowe	Dennis Anderson	Redwood City *Tribune*	daily	20,826
General reporters active in covering environment, less than 25% of time:				
Andy Gollan	John Jordan	San Francisco *Progress*	twice-weekly	193,923
Peter Laufer	Dave McQueen	KSAN	radio	FM
Luckii Ludwig	John T. Webb	Antioch *Ledger*	daily	10,009
Bill Lynch	Robert Lynch	Sonoma *Index-Tribune*	weekly	6,408
Heidi Schulman	Jim Simon	KCBS	radio	CBS-owned all news
Jay Thorwaldson	Robert Burgess	Palo Alto *Times*	daily	45,171

it isn't important enough, or because it isn't a separate specialized topic which lends itself to a single beat. Their lack of a special reporter may reflect a philosophy about specialization, not a lack of commitment to ecology.

The impression that these organizations do not feel a specialist is necessary is strengthened by the fact that two-thirds of them claim they cannot afford one. If a specialist were considered important enough, a way around the budget problem could be found. Almost all the organizations with a specialist have simply added environment to the reporter's load or substituted environment for other beats. The only organization which hired someone specifically for the job from outside is the *Pacific Sun,* a weekly newspaper in Marin County. (The Richmond *Freedom News* also acquired someone from outside, but its staff is volunteer.)

Significantly more of the reporters in the high group are employed by newspapers than by broadcasting stations. While broadcasting organizations claim to have as many specialists as newspapers do, the reporters they name as specialists spend less time on the environment than their counterparts at the newspapers.

Environment reporters seldom use television and radio as sources. Almost three-quarters use newspapers and magazines frequently, less than one-quarter TV and radio. The use of newspapers is as high among newspaper reporters as among broadcasters, suggesting not only a dependence of broadcasting on newspaper stories, but also a dependence of newspapers on each other. A few reporters point out this "round robin" effect. The San Jose paper picks up leads from the Oakland paper, according to Oakland *Tribune* reporter Fred Garretson; San Rafael gets them from San Jose; and the Associated Press picks them up only when they reach San Rafael. ~~If this is true, a few key newspapers~~ may be doing most of the gatekeeping for the Bay Area wire services and the Bay Area media dependent on them.

The environment reporters in the Bay Area are generally not active conservationists, and sometimes proud of it. But they do rely heavily on the conservationists for their environmental information.

Almost three-fourths of the group use conservation groups and spokesmen frequently, and nearly two-thirds use conservation publications–the Sierra Club *Bulletin, Cry California, Environment, Conservation News,* and the publications of the Audubon Society and the Planning and Conservation League. Although industry public relations men supply newsmen with as much, or more, material as do conservationists, the reporters seem to give more credence to the conservationists. Reporters give the impression that they tend to ignore industry news releases, as Table II suggests.

A number of reporters complain of being deluged with too much information, with Dusheck castigating the conservationists specifically. He is overrun, he says, with ecology stories, and most go in the "circular file." Ecology action grops are "spurious," because they are concerned with political reform, not saving the environment. "It is not advertisers or political interests that pressure me, but militant environmentalists trying to sell me their pet project."

In contrast, some of the newsmen think that persistent propaganda of such groups as the Sierra Club may have had something to do with creating the environment issue in the media, with the conservationists themselves being the catalyst in the information explosion. "Conservationists, who had been vocal all along, increased their warning and were joined by large numbers of young people and concerned consumers," says KCBS news director Jim Simon.

Table II

SOURCES

Environmental Information Frequently Used[*]

Source	Number of Times Mentioned
[†]Conservation groups and spokesmen	24
Newspapers	24
Magazines	24
[†]Own field work	21
Conservation publications	20
Government agency releases	18
[†]Government spokesmen	17
[†]Seminars, institutes, and conventions	16
University news releases	16
University professors	16
[†]Industry spokesmen	16
Industry news releases	12
[†]Scientific journals	10
University task force reports	9
Government task force reports	8
Television	8
Industry task force reports	6
Radio	6

[*] From a total of 33 reporters who responded to the questionnaire.

[†] Sources mentioned significantly more (p .05) by reporters spending more than 25% of their time on environment.

In contrast to their involvement with the conservationists on the job, few of the reporters are active in conservation or ecology groups outside the job. "I am not," declares Tom Harris of the San Jose *Mercury* and *News,* "and I feel I would destroy my objectivity by so joining. It is imperative that I, and others, maintain a stance combining interest with independence to guard against prejudicing approaches and stories." Editors sometimes agree: says Ralph Fairchild of the Fremont ***Argus,*** "I believe seriously it is poor editorial policy to try to wear two hats–one as editor and one as a participant in an organization. It is pretty damn difficult to castigate your own organization for indifference, incompetence, or anything else when you belong to it."

If an environment reporter or his editor does belong to a conservation group, it is usually the Sierra Club, Save the Bay, California Tomorrow, or the Audubon Society.

With so much agreement on background and attitude, do the environment reporters also agree on just what it is that they are covering–are they, in fact, all talking about the same thing? David Hendin, news editor for Enterprise Science Service, defined environment reporting in an article in ***Quill,*** August

1970, in a way that could almost be a composite of Bay Area newsmen's definitions. He worded it:

> When one thinks about it, it's a curious phrase. Is there any reporting that isn't environmental reporting? Politics is part of the environment. Education is part of the environment. Sports are part of the environment, and the pollution of air and water are certainly parts of the environment.
>
> The environment is the world people live in, and ecology is the relationship of living things—men, animals and plants—with their environment. When one discusses environmental reporting, I suspect he really means reporting on the deterioration of ecological relationships, the upsetting of the ever-so-delicate balance of nature.

Bay Area newsmen's definitions of the environment range from "reporting on physical resources" to "everything." Seven newsmen restrict their definitions, as Hendin does, to the negative aspects: threats, pollution, deterioration in the environment. One example, from Andy Gollan of the San Francisco *Progress,* is "identifying the politicians, developers, business interests, union chieftains, and media corporations involved in a destructive act or practice."

Over a third of the reporters restrict their definitions even further than Hendin, and would limit environmental reporting to coverage of physical resources, "air, water, land." Nearly half would concentrate on man, threats *to* man caused by pollution, or threats *by* man to the environment.

There is clearly some confusion about the terms ecology and environment, with one reporter defining the latter as "stories affecting the ecology." Even Hendin might better have said that ecology is the *study of* the relationship of living things. Two reporters distinguish between ecology and environmental reporting, calling ecology a narrower term dealing with interrelationships. Nearly one fourth express their definitions in terms of relationships between living things or between man and nature, without mentioning the word ecology.

A further idea of the range in newsmen's usage of the term environmental reporting comes from their responses (Table III) when asked whether they would consider each of a series of hypothetical news stories to be "environment" stories. Noise pollution turns out to be as standard an environment story in the newsmen's minds as water or air pollution. And population ranks almost as high, although birth control does not. That cyclamates, tidal waves, busing, and heart transplants are considered environmental stories by some reporters shows again the wide range of their definitions.

There is also a difference of opinion among the Bay Area environment reporters as to just what caused the media's increased coverage of environment in the last few years. Almost half feel that the media were simply responding to public demand for more environment news. "The media's increased coverage," says one major newspaper reporter, "stems from increased public interest. We follow the crowd, always have. That may not be the way it should be, but that is how it is."

Another quarter of the newsmen attribute the increase to stories about the environment becoming "newsworthy—good copy." They cite President Nixon and other government officials, dramatic events like the Santa Barbara oil spill and campus demonstrations, startling speakers like Paul Ehrlich, or magazine "scare" articles.

They do not in general view themselves as opinion leaders or watchdogs in the environment issue. Only one-eighth say the media in any sense are leaders in the development of the issue, while another eighth express a togetherness—everyone including newsmen becoming aware of the pollution threat at

Table III

DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENT REPORTING

	Hypothetical Story	% Newsmen Considering It Environmental
Smog	Increases in pulmonary disease in the Bay Area are traced to a common element in smog.	97%
Airport Noise	A citizen's group is formed to protest airplane noise from a nearby airport.	97
Sewage Disposal	A sewage recycling plant is set up in a neighboring town.	95
Ocean Pollution	Scientists report that shellfish are losing their shells in coastal areas with high levels of nitrogen fertilizers.	93
Population	A University of California research team projects smaller increases in population than were previously supposed.	86
Zoning	A city zoning change is proposed on the local ballot such that a large residential area near downtown can be converted to commercial use.	77
Power Shortage	Power shortages like the New York "brownouts" are predicted for the Bay Area by summer 1971.	72
Rapid Transit	A section of underground rapid transit is opened for public use.	53
Birth Control	An increase in the popularity of IUD birth control devices among American women is reported.	52
Cyclamates	A sugar substitute similar to cyclamates is linked to cancer in dogs.	35
Tidal Wave	A tidal wave is predicted for the Peninsula coast line.	28
Busing	A bill is passed prohibiting busing of school children.	12
Heart Transplant	A new heart transplant is performed at Stanford Hospital.	9

once. Table IV shows the frequency with which causes of the environmental information explosion are mentioned.

The environment issue exploded, according to one reporter, because "our lives depend on it," but he also feels that it is a fad. A few others are equally pessimistic. They feel that the *issue* will continue to be important, but that media *treatment* of it will die out. "This is a crisis-orientated society," says

Table IV

CAUSES OF MEDIA'S INCREASED COVERAGE OF ENVIRONMENT

Cause	Number of Times Mentioned
Response to public demand, reader interest	36
Existence of pollution itself	19
Newsworthy events	19
speeches by Dr. Ehrlich, etc. 8	
speeches by public officials 3	
oil spill 2	
campus activities 2	
pollution itself made news 4	
Media took the initiative	9
Response to conservationists' demands, activities	6

Ben Williams of KPIX, "and unhappily the media are also crisis-oriented. Only one newsman, George Whitesell of the San Mateo *Times*, would welcome such a decrease in coverage, presumably indicating that in his opinion current attention to the environment is not justified.

A much more common view is that environment will continue to be an important issue in the media; coverage may be faddish in that this is a sudden, new, exciting subject; but the underlying issues will endure, and with them their coverage. Most Bay Area media, in fact, give the impression that they are settling down to include environment as a permanent part of their news coverage.

There are, then, some striking features about environmental reporting in the Bay Area. For one thing, an impressive number of daily and weekly newspapers are making a partial or full-time commitment to covering the subject, but a less impressive number of broadcast journalists are making the environment a regular news beat and important part of the news day. The only ones making the effort are an educational television station, an underground FM station, and an all-news station; perhaps it is too much to expect other types of stations to do the same.

Economics is the major problem in increasing the number of environment reporters; almost all of them who do exist were already on the payroll, which means that some other area of coverage is paying for the environmental information explosion.

Environment reporters rely heavily on the thoughts and writings of the conservationists, a large and active group in the Bay Area; a few in fact credit the rise in interest in the environment to the conservationists' activities and demands.

And only a few think that the media took the initiative on covering environment; they see themselves as largely responding to the public request for information, rather than acting as educators or shapers of events.

Chapter Two

THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXPLOSION

The deterioration of the environment was discovered by the news media sometime in 1969. Possibly it was the dramatic Santa Barbara Channel-Union Oil leak in February and March that triggered the interest of print and broadcast editors in stories about air and water pollution, over-population, pesticides, radiation, waste disposal, and land use. It might have been that such major political figures as Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine and President Nixon were speaking out on problems of the environment. Perhaps the editors finally noticed smog, fish kills, freeway jams, junk. Or they began to understand what the Sierra Club had been telling them. For whatever reasons, the subject of the environment was an idea whose time had come, and coverage burgeoned.

That was the year when Los Angeles bureau chief Gladwin Hill became the national environment writer for the New York *Times.* A number of newspapers followed the lead of the *Times* and assigned specialists to environment beats; there soon were enough such reporters that in 1970 the California Academy of Environmental Writers was organized by two specialists in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Time Magazine started an "Environment" section in 1969. *Look* Magazine devoted almost an entire issue to the ecology crisis that year, *Saturday Review* began a regular section devoted to the environment. Coverage of the environment increased noticeably in *Life* Magazine, and *National Geographic* presented a comprehensive, 9,000 word article on man and his environmental problems.

The broadcast media joined in: CBS *Evening News* with Walter Cronkite inaugurated an irregular feature entitled "Can the World Be Saved?"; ABC's science editor Jules Bergman began to appear more frequently on that network's evening news with ecological features.

Trade book publishers contributed to the information explosion with a glut of ecology books. At least one, Paul Ehrlich's *Population Bomb,* turned out to be a best-seller, and both the writer and the book became newsworthy in themselves.

Advertising, too, turned its attention to the environment. Industries began to stress in their ads in all media what they were doing to protect and/or improve the environment, to the extent that many are now spending more in advertising what they are doing to clean up the air and water than in actual research into how to do it more effectively.

By means of surveys carried out in the course of this study, we have gathered evidence to document that the Bay Area reader (and listener and watcher) is being offered a much greater quantity of information about environmental problems than he received as recently as five or six years ago, and that all media are joining in this coverage.

Four of the surveys were content analyses. In the first, the news pages of the San Francisco *Chronicle* were sampled for environmental stories for the period of January 1965 through December 1970, both to verify that there has been an increase in environmental coverage and to locate the point in time when the increase began.

The second content analysis compared one month's environmental copy sent out by the San Francisco UPI bureau in 1966 and 1970, and also compared the environmental copy generated by the San Francisco AP bureau in April 1970 (the month which included Earth Day) with copy from another month in the same year which had no special environmental event.

Twelve broadcasting stations and 13 daily newspapers in the Bay Area were examined for environmental news on 12 consecutive days in June 1971 in the third content analysis. All three of these studies followed the same stringent definition of what constitutes environmental news, which will be discussed below.

The fourth content analysis, using somewhat different guidelines, measured environmental advertising in the San Francisco *Chronicle* and *Business Week* magazine for the month of April 1970.

Also investigated was media coverage of four Bay Area governmental agencies concerned with environmental problems, comparing coverage in 1968 and 1971.

All of the surveys verified that there is an environmental information explosion in the San Francisco Bay area.

Defining the term "environment" so that it could be operationally useful meant limiting it severely. While the term can be, and often is, used to describe almost everything concerning man's life, we have chosen here to concentrate on five problem areas: air quality, water quality, human population explosion and control, environmental additives, and management of energy-producing resources. Such a definition is by no means all-encompassing, nor was it intended to be. But the five categories cover the most significant issues and can stand for the entire subject. We believe it to be a valid definition.

The researchers for the three surveys using this definition of environmental copy operated from a premise that their analyses were to be made from a conservationist perspective: only articles were coded which either support or refute the notion of a deteriorating environment and a world unable to support its plant and animal life. The problem areas were narrowly defined as:

1. Air quality: articles or stories which deal with such problems as smog and haze, sulfur dioxide and other pollutants resulting from automobile exhaust, factory emissions and various other sources; their effects on animal health and plant life; their costs to the economic system; and methods of control.

2. Water quality: articles or stories which deal with such problems as factory wastes, sewage disposal, thermal discharges, and so forth; their effects on animal health and plant life; their costs to the economic system; and methods of control.

3. Human population explosion and control: articles or stories dealing with the possibility of overpopulation and ways to prevent or cope with the increase. For example, an article or story on the legal problems of abortion without reference to abortion as a method of population control would not be coded.

4. Environmental additives: articles or stories about natural elements or chemical compounds artificially introduced into the ecosystem by possible build-up in and transmission through the food chain, or which cause upset in the ecosystem through destruction of a species with possible detrimental effects to plant and animal life; for example, DDT and other pesticides, herbicides, mercury, and radiation. This does not include cigarette smoking, fluoride, or cyclamates.

5. Management of energy-producing resources: articles or stories discussing the supply of flowing water, coal, oil, natural gas, steam, or fissionable materials in the production of power, from the perspective of expanding power needs *and* decreasing resources.

The reliability of the definition was tested as follows. One researcher, who was not involved in the creation of the definition, was briefed on the coding scheme, and her understanding was pre-tested on a single issue of the New York *Times.* When it appeared that she understood the five components of the definition, she content analyzed 12 issues each year of the San Francisco *Chronicle,* randomly selected but repeated year to year, from 1965 through 1970. The analysis of one year, 1969, was replicated by another researcher to determine if the use of the same definition would produce identical results. Reliability for the two coders exceeded 80 percent.

One other problem, not easily solved, was how much of a news article (for both print and broadcasting) had to be about the environment for it to be coded. For hard news stories the logic of the inverted pyramid-style of writing was followed: if the environmental subject matter was not mentioned in the first two or three paragraphs, the story was not coded. Greater leeway was allowed for obvious feature stories. Here the principal subject matter of the piece had to concern one of the five parts of the definition. Without such rules, it would have been impossible to code the mass of print and broadcast content in this study.

The San Francisco *Chronicle*

The San Francisco *Chronicle* was a logical choice for study both because it has the highest circulation in the Bay Area and because its area of readership includes all nine counties. News coverage was analyzed on the same 12 dates each year from January 1965 through December 1970,* with attention to the number of environmental stories, their length, headline size, and position in the paper. Editorials on the subject were checked for number, length, and position in the column. (A description of the methodology of the study is included in Appendix II.)

There was a significant increase in coverage of the environment over the six-year span, with a dramatic increase in 1969 and 1970. In a newspaper which remained the same size, news stories relating to the environment rose from a total of 112.75 inches in 1965 to 616 in 1970, a jump of almost 550 percent. (Exact figures are in Tables I, II, and III.)

The most marked increase was in category 4, "environmental additives," which went from a low of no inches at all in 1966 to a high of 218.75 inches in 1970.

At the same time, category 5, "decreasing energy resources," received very little attention. While the total number of column inches in the other categories averaged 352, decreasing energy resources totalled only 20.5, with 19 of those inches appearing in the last two years.

As the total amount of coverage increased, so did the number and length of environmental stories. The sample found only 15 articles in 1965, 25 in 1969, and a total of 38 in 1970. The problem of environmental additives may have had the most space, but air and water pollution received more separate mentions in 1970, and in most of the years under study.

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*In September 1965, as a result of mergers among San Francisco newspapers, the San Francisco *Examiner* took over the Sunday field. For that reason, ten of 11 Sunday issues coded were *Examiners.* Since this is the paper that *Chronicle* subscribers receive on Sundays, the difference in name and management was deemed irrelevant because the factor being studied was the paper's role as an information source for its readers, not the relative performance of one paper or another.

Table I

NUMBER OF INCHES PER YEAR IN EACH CATEGORY†

	categories					total per year	average per issue
year	1	2	3	4	5		
1965	28.5	48.5	26.75	7.5	1.5	112.75	9.4
1966	29.25	15.5	29	0	0	73.75	6.15
1967	36.75	13.5	106.75	0	0	157	11
1968*	52.5	0	21	15.5	0	89	8.9
1969	59.5	103.75	44	165	8.5	380.75	31.73
1970	136.5	130.5	119.75	218.75	10.5	616	51.33
total	343	311.75	347.25	406.75	20.5	1429.25	

*includes only ten issues due to the San Francisco newspaper strike, Jan.-Feb. 1968.

Table II

NUMBER OF ARTICLES PER YEAR IN EACH CATEGORY†

	categories					total per year	average per issue
year	1	2	3	4	5		
1965	4	7	2	1	1	15	1.25
1966	3	2	3	0	0	8	.67
1967	6	1	4	0	0	1	.92
1968*	4	0	2	1	0	7	.7
1969	4	6	4	10	1	25	2.09
1970	12	12	4	9	1	38	3.17
total	33	28	19	21	3	104	

*includes only ten issues due to the San Francisco newspaper strike, Jan.-Feb. 1968.

† 1) air pollution, 2) water pollution, 3) population explosion, 4) environmental additives, 5) decreasing energy resources

Table III

NUMBER OF COLUMN INCHES PER ARTICLE

year	inches/article
1965	7.52
1966	9.22
1967	14.27
1968	12.71
1969	15.23
1970	16.21

With the increase in stories and inches came an increase in accompanying photos. Throughout the six years the most common headline size was one- or two-column, with three- and four-column heads appearing infrequently until the last two years. Before 1970 exactly one headline was wider than four-column; in that year five stories were considered important enough–or long enough–to rate headlines from five to eight columns wide. And environment stories began to creep slowly to the front of the paper and the top of the page.

Two facets of environment reporting did not change. In spite of the greatly increased coverage, the number of staff-written articles rose only proportionately to the increase. On the whole, the wire services and special services were responsible for almost twice the amount of coverage that was produced by the *Chronicle* staff. As to sources of information, the government remained the overwhelming leader, with state and local agencies used most often, followed by federal agencies and then legislators on all levels.

(In determining the information source, the problem of choosing between different sources was encountered only two or three times. This suggests that almost all of the *Chronicle's* environmental coverage has consisted of one-source articles, rather than multi-source, "in-depth" articles.)

Editorials on the subject showed no increase at all. Only seven appeared in the six-year sample, with air pollution, water pollution, and the population explosion receiving about equal mention.

It is clear that the *Chronicle* is offering its readers vastly increased amounts of information, if not advice or guidance, with the preponderance of that information coming from government sources.

Twelve Days' Coverage

To measure the amount of environmental coverage offered by Bay Area media, broadcast as well as print, a content analysis was performed for the time period from Sunday, June 13 through Thursday, June 24, 1971. The sample was selected to include a wide range of news operations in different mediums.

Included in the study were six Bay Area VHF television stations, six Bay Area AM radio stations, all five Bay Area metropolitan daily newspapers (and their Sunday editions), and eight other Bay Area daily newspapers (and their Sunday editions).

Almost all non-advertising newspaper content, all non-advertising content within regular evening television news programming, and all non-advertising content within regular evening drivetime (4-7 p.m.) radio news programming was examined.

Nine coders analyzed broadcast content and two coders analyzed newspaper content. They followed the same operational definition as in the previous study, coding only for the five components of air quality, water quality, human population explosion and control, environmental additives, and management of energy-producing resources. Pre-test and during-test reliability checks produced acceptable coder agreement.

The results (Table IV) show that the metropolitan newspapers are all carrying about the same number of environmental stories, with Sunday editions accounting for a large proportion of the total. It is impossible to generalize about the smaller dailies, beyond the fact that they all do include news about the environment in their pages. Similarly it is possible to say only that radio and television have discovered the subject, and some consider it more newsworthy than others.

Simultaneously with this content analysis, the researchers also coded news stories which *they* considered to be environmentally related, even though the stories may not have been written from the conservationist

Table IV
FIVE-PART DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Broadcast Content*		Total Items
KGO-TV	(9 one-hour, 3 half-hour local; 9 half-hour ABC network)	10
KNTV	(9 half-hour local, 9 half-hour ABC network)	4
KPIX-TV	(9 one-hour, 3 half-hour local; 12 half-hour CBS network)	10
KQED-TV	(9 one-hour local broadcasts)	5
KRON-TV	(9 one-hour local, 3 half-hour local, 12 NBC network half-hour)	11
KTVU	(9 one-hour local)	8
KCBS Radio	(12 three-hour broadcasts–local with CBS newscasts)	10
KFRC Radio	(12 thirteen-minute local news broadcasts)	2
KGO Radio	(9 three-hour–local with ABC, weekend on hour)	11
KNBR Radio	(12 days news programs scattered through time period–local and NBC)	0
KNEW Radio	(12 days on-the-hour newscasts, etc.)	2
KSFO Radio	(12 days on-the-hour, half-hour, etc.–baseball station, for five days there were fewer than normal newscasts)	3

Newspaper Content

Metropolitan Dailies–10 days (excluding Sunday editions)	Total Items
San Jose *Mercury*	33
Oakland *Tribune*	32
San Jose *News*	27
San Francisco *Examiner*	24
San Francisco *Chronicle*	23

Sunday Newspapers–2 days	Total Items
Examiner and *Chronicle*	12
Mercury-News	12
Tribune	7
Hayward *Review*	7
Fremont *Argus*	3
Contra Costa *Times*	3

Non-Metropolitan Dailies–10 days (excluding Sunday)	Total Items
Hayward *Review*	18
San Mateo *Times*	18
Palo Alto *Times*	13
Contra Costa *Times* (7 days)	11
Redwood City *Tribune*	11
Fremont *Argus*	8
Concord *Transcript* (9 days)	5
Fremont *News-Register*	5

*KGO-TV–ABC owned and operated
KNTV–ABC affiliate, San Jose, owned by Allen T. Gilliland
KPIX-TV–CBS affiliate, owned by Westinghouse
KQED-TV–local, non-commercial
KRON–NBC affiliate, owned by San Francisco *Chronicle*
KTVU–financially successful independent, Oakland

KCBS Radio–all news, owned and operated by CBS network
KFRC Radio–pop-rock, owned by RKO General
KGO Radio–news and talk, owned and operated by ABC network
KNBR Radio–middle-of-the-road music and news, owned and operated by NBC network
KNEW Radio–middle-of-the-road music, Oakland, owned by Metromedia
KSFO Radio–middle-of-the-road music and sports, owned by Golden West Broadcasters

perspective, or did not fit within the accepted five-part definition. Results from that additional analysis appear in Table V.

The two- and three-fold increases in the second set of figures are in part attributable to the many additional subjects of an environmental nature counted by the coders: for example, land and water use, noise pollution, recycling, and forestry. Also, the figures reflect the bias of college students in California who have worked on a project dealing with the environment—they tend to see many more stories as environmental (or having environmental implications) than would another set of coders.

Table V

ALL-INCLUSIVE DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Broadcast Content		Total Items
KGO-TV	(9 one-hour, 3 half-hour local; 9 half-hour ABC network)	17
KNTV	(9 half-hour local, 9 half-hour ABC network)	5
KPIX-TV	(9 one-hour, 3 half-hour local; 12 half-hour CBS network)	18
KQED-TV	(9 one-hour local broadcasts)	14
KTVU	(9 one-hour local)	14
KCBS Radio	(12 three-hour broadcasts–local with CBS newscasts)	20
KFRC Radio	(12 thirteen-minute local news broadcasts)	2
KGO Radio	(9 three-hour–local with ABC, weekend on hour)	20
KNBR Radio	(12 days news programs scattered through time period–local and NBC)	2
KNEW Radio	(12 days on-the-hour newscasts, etc.)	4
KSFO Radio	(12 days on-the-hour, half-hour, etc.–baseball station, for five days there were fewer than normal newscasts)	3

Newspaper Content

Metropolitan Dailies–10 days (excluding Sunday editions)	Total Items
San Jose *Mercury*	72
Oakland *Tribune*	77
San Jose *News*	73
San Francisco *Examiner*	56
San Francisco *Chronicle*	79

Sunday Newspapers–2 days	Total Items
Examiner and *Chronicle*	40
Mercury-News	37
Tribune	30
Hayward *Review*	25
Fremont *Argus*	10
Contra Costa *Times*	15

Non-Metropolitan Dailies–10 days (excluding Sunday)	Total Items
Hayward *Review*	68
San Mateo *Times*	52
Palo Alto *Times*	54
Contra Costa *Times* (7 days)	32
Redwood City *Tribune*	42
Fremont *Argus*	45
Concord *Transcript* (9 days)	26
Fremont *News-Register*	30

San Francisco Wire Services

The wire services were picked for study because of their pivotal role in coverage. Also of interest was the effect of a pseudo-event (using Daniel Boorstin's term, defined as an event created specifically for publicity) on the kind and amount of environmental copy generated. Earth Day, a nationwide created happening, depended upon the media for its impact. How effective Earth Day was in terms of creating additional copy was also measured by content analysis.

In San Francisco, the UPI staff consists of approximately 40 newsmen, photographers and editors, who, with the help of 100 stringers and client newspapers cover California from the Oregon border to San Luis Obispo. AP has 38 people on news, editorial and photo, and the bureau chief is uncertain as to the number of stringers employed.

Although the percentage varies day to day, UPI's copy source is roughly divided among staff, stringers, and pickups from client newspapers. AP did not have any figures available for a breakdown of copy source, but said that copy comes "primarily from member papers, then staff, then stringers."

Pickup copy–news copy that the wires take from the major local papers, check (most of the time) for accuracy, possibly rewrite, and send out over the wires–is approximately a third of all the material used.

The pivotal role of the wire services in providing environmental news to Bay Area news media can be understood from this example of coverage in mid-1971 of a Bay Area Air Pollution Control District meeting. In the morning session the BAAPCD staff presented the district directors with a report citing a 17 percent reduction in emissions from all sources of air pollution in the district. A *Chronicle* reporter left during the lunch break and filed his story. After lunch however, the directors returned and proceeded to take the report apart, item by item. The directors finally concluded that the report could not support its claim of pollution reduction. Reporters for other newspapers who covered the afternoon session filed correct accounts of the meeting. But the *Chronicle* hit the street first, and both AP and UPI picked up its version. The next day radio and television stations and other newspapers in the Bay Area reported that the air was "getting cleaner." Not only was the air not getting cleaner, but the *Chronicle* had managed to muddy the wire services as well.

UPI's copy is sent out over one of three news wires–two are national and one covers the seven western states–and additional material goes over the sports, race, and photo wires. "Audio" copy, rewritten for the ear and mostly worded in the present tense, goes over the radio wire, which serves both radio and television stations. AP has an "A" wire, which is national and international news; a "California Big Cities" wire, which is limited to California news and primarily subscribed to by urban media; and a "Single Circuit California" wire, which is for small newspapers and is split into northern and southern California. AP also has sports, photo, and radio wires.

A total of four months' worth of copy sent out over these wires was content analyzed. A word count was used in the analysis, rather than the more common line or inch count, because the two bureaus have different size type on their outgoing teletypes, and it was the only meaningful measurement available.

One month's wire copy in 1966 and 1970 generated by the San Francisco bureau of UPI was analyzed, using the five-part definition for environmental copy described earlier. In the four years environmental copy increased some 400 percent, from 830 words in September 1966 to 2,650 words in September 1970. This certainly bore out the belief that there had been an environmental information explosion (Figure 1).

The other half of the survey was to analyze the month around Earth Day to determine the efficacy of a pseudo-event. Associated Press moved 4,685 words in the month around April 22, 1970, as compared with 3,140 in September 1970—an increase of about 50 percent (Figure 1). From this perspective, Earth Day was a striking success. (It should be noted that there was in addition a great deal of copy *about* Earth Day moved over the wires, but only those stories were coded that fell within the narrowly drawn categories. Five of the 22 stories coded could be considered spin-offs of the Earth Day bandwagon.)

Environmental wire copy originates from a variety of specific events, handouts, press releases and staff ideas. An example of the last category was UPI staffer John Lieghty, who got the germ of a feature story by thumbing through a copy of *What's New in Research* and ended up doing more than 1,500 words on tree-killing smog in Southern California.

Environmental features coming out of both bureaus are done by whoever happens to be interested, and in that manner they are no different from any other type of feature story. UPI has five staffers who do environmental writing, and AP has two. None has any particular qualification other than personal interest.

Environmental copy comes in bunches, according to one UPI reporter. "One story will generate sidebars, reaction pieces, and so on. Conversely, when one type of story has been used, similar stories will be killed until some time has lapsed. Clients do not want continual 'sameness' copy."

The AP bureau has done a variety of environmental features in recent years, such as a survey of proposed skyscrapers in San Francisco—they consider "Manhattanization" an environmental problem—with interviews of principals involved. They ran the story with special "before" and "after" pictures of the San Francisco skyline. The bureau also put together a feature on how much smaller San Francisco Bay is now as compared to ten years ago. And when one of their men with an ecology interest was doing a stint in Sacramento he did a weekly roundup on environmental bills before the state legislature. Such efforts do not always pay off, however. Two staffers were once doing a monthly roundup of ecology news, and according to AP's bureau chief Paul Finch, "The papers were not using it. Editors seem to prefer spot news."

UPI's approach to environmental stories is divided between news value and feature value. News is a spot story, usually with an average length of 300 words on breaking events like a news conference or a tanker spill. Reaction pieces and sidebars to these events are done feature style. For instance, UPI ran the full text and a spot story of President Nixon's environmental speech. The reaction of conservation leaders to that speech was considered feature material.

The best outlet for feature material at UPI is a service called "World Horizons." The four divisions send copy to New York, where the decision is made on what to run, and then from Saturday midnight to 8 a.m. Sunday copy is sent on the "A" wire under the "World Horizons" heading. It is felt in the San Francisco office that environmental feature copy is given better treatment than any other type. "There

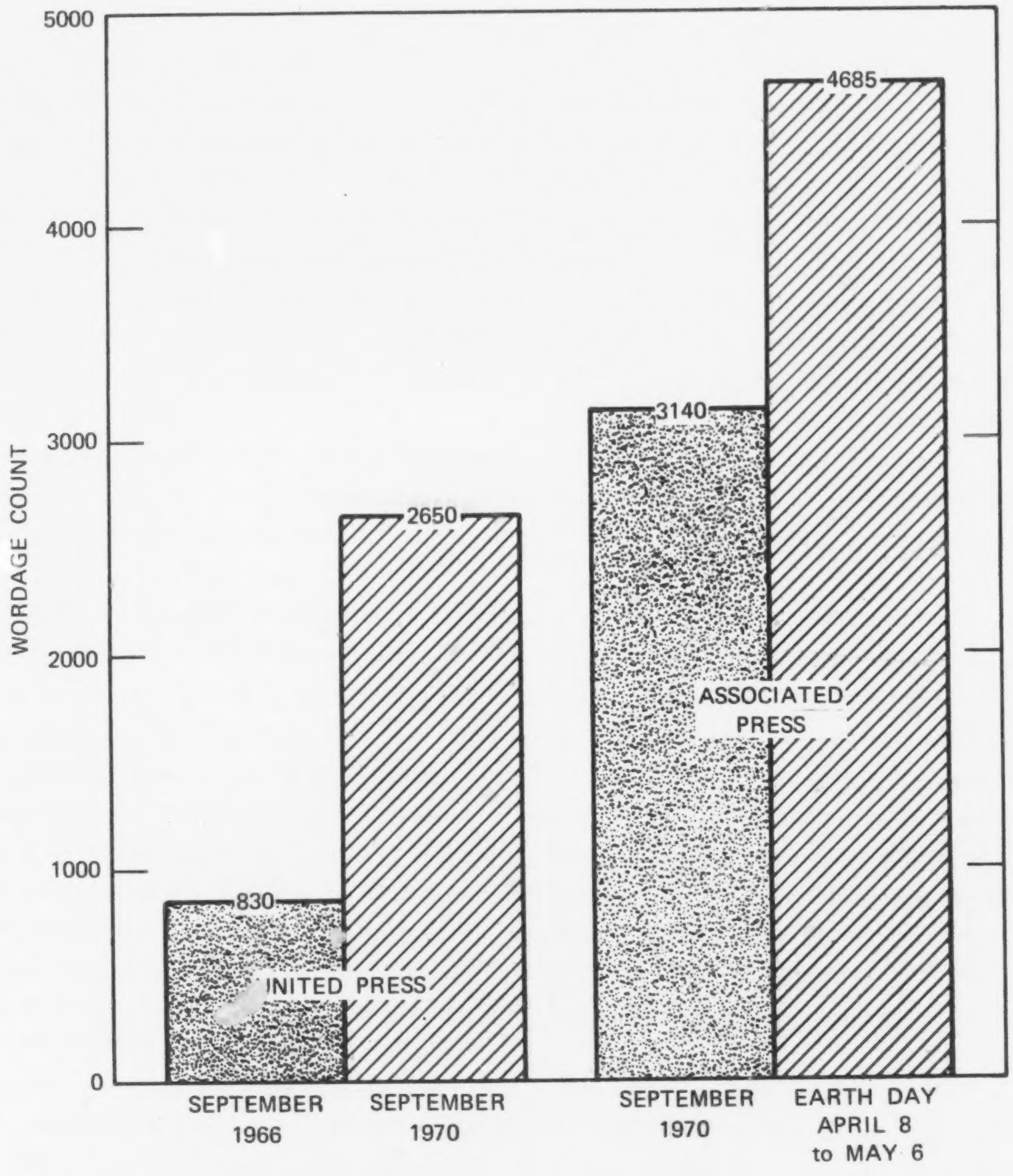
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
WORDAGE COUNT
830
2650
3140
4685
UNITED PRESS
ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEPTEMBER 1966
SEPTEMBER 1970
SEPTEMBER 1970
EARTH DAY APRIL 8 to MAY 6

Figure 1

is a much greater chance of environmental features seeing print than any other kind," one reporter claimed. UPI also has a "Science Today" daily news wire column, donated by staffers from all bureaus, where environmental stories crop up occasionally.

There are some 20 separate agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area concerned with pollution control, and Finch feels that coverage of these agencies is both complicated and inadequate. "AP is a creature of member newspapers," he said. "We have two people assigned to keeping tabs on the agency meetings. If a meeting isn't of more than regional interest we can only recommend that member papers cover it." As the following indicates, member papers' performance in covering regularly-scheduled meetings has also improved since the environmental information explosion.

Covering the Agencies

The approximately 20 governmental agencies whose activities affect, directly or indirectly, issues of environmental concern range from county transit districts to pollution control boards, from three-man appointed committees to a dozen elected representatives.

Because these government bodies have decision-making power that can influence the amount of environmental damage or repair in the Bay Area, the extent to which their meetings and decisions are reported by the media is of interest to anyone concerned about environmental deterioration. Such coverage is also an indicator of commitment to environmental reporting by the media. Because agency meetings are known in advance, happen with regularity, and follow an agenda, they are fairly easy to cover.

More than a year before the onset of the environmental information explosion in the Bay Area Fred Garretson, environmental writer for the Oakland *Tribune,* began to keep an informal "scorecard," listing which newspapers covered which agency meetings, and how often. Garretson's scorecard was compiled before the environment became a popular issue, and as a rough indication of prior media coverage it gave researchers a base line measure for determining the amount of change in media coverage over time.

The four agencies monitored were the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), and the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District (BAAPCD). These agencies were chosen from the many that Garretson monitored because they deal most directly with environmental issues.

The BCDC was formed to prevent further shrinkage and pollution of San Francisco Bay. The Water Quality Control Board was created for the purpose of preventing and controlling water pollution and planning for the disposal of domestic sewage and industrial wastes. EBMUD, created in 1921, currently provides water for 15 cities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. It is responsible for wastewater interception, treatment, and disposal for the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont. The BAAPCD monitors and sets emission standards for air pollution in most of the nine-county Bay Area.

BCDC was monitored for the meetings of March 4, March 19, April 1 and April 15, 1971. The Regional Water Quality Control Board was monitored February 24, March 26 and April 22. The BAAPCD was monitored for February 19, March 3, March 25, April 7 and May 5. EBMUD was monitored for February 23, March 10, March 23, April 13 and April 17. In all cases the aid of the public information officer or the public relations representative was enlisted. Joseph Bodovitz of BCDC, William Gingrich of the Water Quality Board, Paul Fletcher and Bryan McCrea of EBMUD, and Ted McHugh of BAAPCD all gave valuable assistance.

Bay Conservation and Development Commission–Before the environmental information explosion BCDC meetings were regularly staffed by the Oakland *Tribune* and the San Jose *Mercury*. The San Francisco *Chronicle* and the San Francisco *Examiner,* along with United Press International, staffed the meetings on a drop-in basis, showing up approximately 70 percent of the time. Associated Press seldom staffed the meetings, and only occasionally printed press releases.

Currently the BCDC is regularly covered by the *Tribune, Mercury, Examiner* and *Chronicle*. The San Rafael *Independent-Journal* staffed half of the meetings monitored, and at least once the Fremont *Argus,* the McGraw-Hill News Service, television stations KPIX, KTVU, KQED and KGO, radio stations KCBS, KSFO and KIOI staffed a meeting. Telephone requests for information were made at least once by the Redwood City *Tribune* and the Hayward *Daily Review*.

Regional Water Quality Control Board–Water Quality Board meetings used to be regularly staffed by the *Tribune* and the *Mercury*. The *Examiner* showed up about 40 percent of the time, and UPI about 10 percent. The *Chronicle* and AP did not cover the agency.

Currently the *Chronicle, Examiner, Mercury, Independent-Journal* and *Tribune* all regularly staff the meetings. Periodic coverage is also provided by the Contra Costa *Times,* the monthly *Freedom News,* the Fremont *Argus,* the weekly *Pacific Sun* and Peninsula Newspapers Incorporated. At one monitored meeting broadcast coverage was provided by KPIX-TV and KCBS radio. At the same meeting telephone calls were received from radio stations KFRC, KGO, KSFO and KYA.

Bay Area Air Pollution Control District–Before the information explosion BAAPCD meetings were covered approximately 40 percent of the time by the *Tribune, Mercury, Examiner* and *Chronicle*. UPI staffed the meetings about 10 percent of the time, and AP didn't cover the agency at all.

Currently the BAAPCD is regularly covered, either in person or by telephone, by the *Examiner, Mercury, Chronicle, Tribune, Independent-Journal* and Hayward *Daily Review.* During the monitoring period calls were received from the Fairfield-Suisun *Daily Republic,* Peninsula Newspapers Inc., the Livermore *Herald and News,* the Redwood City *Tribune,* the San Mateo *Times,* the Los Angeles *Times,* the Pittsburg *Post-Dispatch* and the Vallejo *Times-Herald.* Calls were also received from radio stations KIOI, KSFO, KNEW, KFRC and KEST, and television stations KTVU, KGO, KQED and KRON.

East Bay Municipal Utility District–EBMUD meetings used to be staffed regularly by the Oakland *Tribune,* 30 percent of the time by the *Examiner* and approximately 10 percent of the time by the *Chronicle.*

Currently the EBMUD is covered by two papers. The *Tribune* is always present, and the Hayward *Daily Review* always calls. No other news media take an interest.

Obviously media coverage of governmental agencies dealing with the environment has increased in the last year or two.

It is noteworthy that where the wire services once spasmodically covered these agencies, they now provide no direct coverage at all. With the increase in local media coverage, the wires seem to be able to rely on their client newspapers for information.

The increase in coverage by small newspapers is an indication of the growing awareness of environmental issues, and the role governmental agencies play in dealing with those issues. When small papers, hampered by lean budgets and tiny staffs, find the time to cover personally or by telephone committee meetings and board hearings, then the extent of media involvement is large.

The response of the broadcast news media to the increased newsworthiness of such government agencies is also worth note. Where just a few years ago the broadcast media gave no coverage at all to such meetings, now they are at least periodically checking in when issues are raised or decisions made that concern the environment.

With the increased attention to environment as a subject of news coverage in both print and broadcast media, it is only logical that advertising would begin to reflect a similar trend, either because environment in itself is now a fashionable concept, or because certain industries are smarting from conservationist attacks. The following study was made to learn if there is presently a significant amount of such environmental advertising.

Environmental Advertising

Environmental advertising may be conveniently divided into two categories. The first consists of all ads, regardless of the product or service advertised, that explicitly refer to the environment in their copy. Such ads contain one or more of these words or phrases: clean(er) air, clean(er) water, Earth Day, ecology, environment, natural resources, pollution, recycling, unspoiled (beauty), and wildlife (wilderness).

The second category consists of all ads, regardless of their copy, that are on behalf of a product or service with clear-cut environmental implications. The products and services in these "quasi-environmental" ads have an acknowledged impact on energy consumption, pollution, waste disposal, health, or growth, and include airlines, appliances, automotive products, construction, detergents, industrial activity, pesticides, public utilities, real estate, and tobacco. Ads for less obviously environmentally-related items fall into this category, too: a soft drink ad that boasts about its "no deposit; no return" bottles is quasi-environmental because of its implications for the recycling of natural resources.

In an effort to estimate the prevalence of environmental advertising, one local newspaper and one national magazine were selected for content analysis according to the above criteria.

Display advertising in the San Francisco *Chronicle* and the Sunday *Chronicle and Examiner* was surveyed for the month of April 1970–the same month as Earth Day (April 22), which attracted considerable attention in the San Francisco area. Environmental interest was presumably at its height.

The magazine selected for analysis was *Business Week,* a leading slick weekly magazine for businessmen, with a paid circulation of 560,000. Most of the ads in *Business Week* are corporate image advertisements or sales pitches for large-scale technological products and services–both fertile grounds for environmental advertising. Once again, all display advertisements in the month of April, 1970, were examined.

Environmental advertisements were coded into five categories, as follows: (1) Media advertisements concerning a speech, program, article, etc., of environmental interest; (2) Commercial advertisements arguing the environmental benefits of a product, service, or company; (3) Commercial advertisements defending a product, service, or company against environmental attack; (4) Commercial advertisements using the listed words and phrases in an essentially non-environmental "buzz word" context; (5) Non-commercial advertisements from conservationist groups and the like.

Table VI shows the results for environmental advertisements:

Table VI

Category	*S.F. Chronicle*		*Business Week*	
	Ads	Agate Lines	Ads	Pages
Media	18	8,730	0	0.00
Benefits	14	25,330	15	17.67
Defenses	6	13,200	1	0.33
Buzz Words	0	––	6	6.00
Conservation	0	––	0	0.00
Total	38	47,260	22	24.00

Before analyzing the total figures, a word about the various categories is in order. Not surprisingly, ads extolling the environmental virtues of a product or service were the most common by a considerable margin. Media ads were very frequent in the *Chronicle,* completely absent in ***Business Week***; a national magazine for businessmen would be a poor place to advertise an environmental television program. Defenses were predictably more common in the *Chronicle* than in ***Business Week***; few companies feel compelled to defend themselves to their colleagues on environmental grounds.

Neither publication contained any ads from conservation groups. Such groups would probably consider ***Business Week*** a poor medium for their purposes. As for the *Chronicle,* it did carry at least seven non-commercial environmental advertisements in 1970, but none of them in April. The frequency of conservation ads is limited by the scarcity of funds.

Perhaps the most surprising finding was the absence of buzz word advertisements in the *Chronicle.* Consumer buzz word ads are quite common, for example the campaigns for Lark cigarettes ("Stop Smogging") and Murine eye drops ("Murine for Eye Pollution"). Though both Lark and Murine are regular *Chronicle* advertisers, neither advertised in April. The buzz word ads in ***Business Week*** were, of course, less consumer-oriented. Typical was an ad from the American Smelting and Refining Company. It began "What has four legs and eats zinc?," then went on to assert that wildlife cannot survive without zinc in the soil. ASARCO is a major supplier of zinc die-casting alloys; it has little to do with feeding animals or fertilizing the soil.

What is most interesting about these data is the size of the totals. In one month, the *Chronicle* ran 38 environmental advertisements, totaling 47,260 agate lines. (Thirteen of the 38 ads were repetitions of other ads in the sample, making a total of 25 different environmental advertisements during the sampling period.) ***Business Week*** ran 22 environmental advertisements, for a total of 24 pages.

During the sampling period, the *Chronicle* (plus the Sunday *Chronicle and Examiner*) ran a grand total of 2,252,599 agate lines of display advertising. (Monthly Report, *Media Records*, San Francisco, April, 1970). Environmental advertisements thus represented 2.1 percent of the *Chronicle's* total display advertising linage. *Business Week*, meanwhile, ran 318 pages of advertising in April of 1970. Thus, 7.5 percent of the magazine's total ad volume was composed of environmental advertisements.

The figure for the *Chronicle* is kept low by the vast quantity of retail advertising that could hardly be expected to contain environmental content. Only 10.2 percent (4,830 lines) of the environmental advertisements in the *Chronicle* sample were classified as "retail" by *Media Records*. By contrast, retail advertising accounted for 69.4 percent (1,562,564 lines) of the newspaper's total ad linage. Out of 690,035 non-retail advertising lines in the *Chronicle* during the month of April, 42,430 lines consisted of environmental advertisements. Thus, environmental advertisements accounted for 6.2 percent of the newspaper's non-retail display advertising linage during the sampling period.

What about quasi-environmental advertisements? Listed below are several categories of advertisements with clear-cut environmental implications, together with their total *Chronicle* advertising linage during the sampling period. Both the categories and the linage figures are the work of *Media Records*.

Category	Linage
Automotive (product)	120,703
Airlines	112,214
Appliances (retail)	61,828
Real estate	40,569
Construction	24,527
Appliances (product)	20,218
Automotive (retail)	18,750
Tobacco	11,158
Industrial	9,643
Detergents	7,548
Public utilities	6,910
Pesticides	510
Total	434,578

This partial list sums to 434,578 agate lines of quasi-environmental advertisements–19.3 percent of the total display advertising in the *Chronicle* during the sampling period.

The *Media Records* categories were designed for consumer publications, and are not directly applicable to *Business Week*. As befits its audience, *Business Week* runs a high concentration of industrial and industry-related ads. Well over four-fifths of its advertising volume falls into the "automotive," "airlines," "construction," "industrial," and "public utilities" categories. There are very few advertisements in *Business Week* that are not quasi-environmental.

The vast majority of the environmental advertisers discovered in the *Chronicle* (and a large minority of those in the *Business Week* sample) are major national advertisers, whose ads are to be found in nearly every newspaper and consumer magazine. Environmental advertising (which this report will consider in detail in Chapter V) is a widespread, relatively recent phenomenon, and it should be considered part of the environmental information explosion.

Conclusion

In the past two years the news media in the San Francisco Bay Area have increased dramatically their coverage of environmental subjects. As expected, the metropolitan daily newspapers and wire services have led the way, but the quantity of coverage in both local dailies and the broadcast media is encouraging. Regular coverage of selected governmental agencies with environmental objectives has similarly increased, with many news media, large and small, at least receiving telephone reports of actions at scheduled meetings. The advertising industry, and industry as a whole, have picked up this scent and begun to slant advertising copy toward the environment.

While this chapter has chronicled nothing more profound than increased quantity of coverage, it can nevertheless be safely stated that this increase must at least be performing some sort of alerting function to Bay Area readers and viewers: the news media are informing them daily of major threats to the quality of life, and concern for the environment is a steady *cantus firmus* for the day's events.

How useful one subgroup of the Bay Area's population finds this increased coverage in their efforts to solve environmental problems is the subject of Chapter III.

total of 2,252,599 agate lines of display advertising. (Monthly Report, *Media Records*, San Francisco, April, 1970). Environmental advertisements thus represented 2.1 percent of the *Chronicle's* total display advertising linage. *Business Week*, meanwhile, ran 318 pages of advertising in April of 1970. Thus, 7.5 percent of the magazine's total ad volume was composed of environmental advertisements.

The figure for the *Chronicle* is kept low by the vast quantity of retail advertising that could hardly be expected to contain environmental content. Only 10.2 percent (4,830 lines) of the environmental advertisements in the *Chronicle* sample were classified as "retail" by *Media Records*. By contrast, retail advertising accounted for 69.4 percent (1,562,564 lines) of the newspaper's total ad linage. Out of 690,035 non-retail advertising lines in the *Chronicle* during the month of April, 42,430 lines consisted of environmental advertisements. Thus, environmental advertisements accounted for 6.2 percent of the newspaper's non-retail display advertising linage during the sampling period.

What about quasi-environmental advertisements? Listed below are several categories of advertisements with clear-cut environmental implications, together with their total *Chronicle* advertising linage during the sampling period. Both the categories and the linage figures are the work of *Media Records*.

Category	Linage
Automotive (product)	120,703
Airlines	112,214
Appliances (retail)	61,828
Real estate	40,569
Construction	24,527
Appliances (product)	20,218
Automotive (retail)	18,750
Tobacco	11,158
Industrial	9,643
Detergents	7,548
Public utilities	6,910
Pesticides	510
Total	434,578

This partial list sums to 434,578 agate lines of quasi-environmental advertisements–19.3 percent of the total display advertising in the *Chronicle* during the sampling period.

The *Media Records* categories were designed for consumer publications, and are not directly applicable to *Business Week*. As befits its audience, *Business Week* runs a high concentration of industrial and industry-related ads. Well over four-fifths of its advertising volume falls into the "automotive," "airlines," "construction," "industrial," and "public utilities" categories. There are very few advertisements in *Business Week* that are not quasi-environmental.

The vast majority of the environmental advertisers discovered in the *Chronicle* (and a large minority of those in the *Business Week* sample) are major national advertisers, whose ads are to be found in nearly every newspaper and consumer magazine. Environmental advertising (which this report will consider in detail in Chapter V) is a widespread, relatively recent phenomenon, and it should be considered part of the environmental information explosion.

Conclusion

In the past two years the news media in the San Francisco Bay Area have increased dramatically their coverage of environmental subjects. As expected, the metropolitan daily newspapers and wire services have led the way, but the quantity of coverage in both local dailies and the broadcast media is encouraging. Regular coverage of selected governmental agencies with environmental objectives has similarly increased, with many news media, large and small, at least receiving telephone reports of actions at scheduled meetings. The advertising industry, and industry as a whole, have picked up this scent and begun to slant advertising copy toward the environment.

While this chapter has chronicled nothing more profound than increased quantity of coverage, it can nevertheless be safely stated that this increase must at least be performing some sort of alerting function to Bay Area readers and viewers: the news media are informing them daily of major threats to the quality of life, and concern for the environment is a steady *cantus firmus* for the day's events.

How useful one subgroup of the Bay Area's population finds this increased coverage in their efforts to solve environmental problems is the subject of Chapter III.

Chapter Three

ECO-ACTIVISTS AND THE NEWS MEDIA

"Environmental activists" in the San Francisco Bay Area are not reached by mass media environmental coverage, despite the explosion documented in Chapter II.

An "environmental activist" can be defined as any member of a conservation or ecology organization, with the assumption that the payment of membership dues or even the act of joining such a group constitues a gesture of environmental concern, and thus separates the member from the general public. By "reached" it is meant *not* that such people do not see or hear the environmental news offered, but rather they do not consider it one of their alternatives when seeking environmental information.

Inspiration for a survey of activists came from the public relations chief of a large Bay Area corporation, one which is among the most capable of causing environmental damage in the region. He has said that he is not terribly concerned about trying to influence the mass media, since they are geared for the general public and the general public is largely inert when it comes to environmental issues. What he is concerned with, he said, are those persons who have shown the interest and awareness to ally themselves with a political action group (such as the Sierra Club). This kind of person, he feels, does not use the mass media, but relies on in-group and other sources for environmental news. So his efforts are directed towards swaying the clubs, and not the general public.

It appears that he has a good grasp of the situation.

In March 1971, a telephone interview survey was conducted with 301 randomly selected members of the Sierra Club (an eco-activist group) living in the Bay Area. The club's two Bay Area chapters, as of December 31, 1970, had a combined total membership of 39,242. The most salient results of the telephone interviews follow: (Sampling procedure, interview procedure and questionnaire details are included in Appendix III)

Source Most Consulted for Environmental Information: General

Respondents were asked what source they would usually consult for ecology information. (Missing percentages are "don't know")

Source:	Conservation Groups	Daily Papers	Radio-TV	Other Media (magazines, books)	Other (individuals, government, university)
Percent: of 301	52	6	1	11	14

Source Recently Consulted for Conservation Information

There were 149 affirmative responses (49% of 301) to the question, "Do you remember having sought information on an ecology issue recently?" This 149 was then asked where the information was sought.

Source:	Conservation Groups	Daily Papers	Radio-TV	Other Media	Other
Percent: of 149	34	13	1	19	32

Source Respondent Would Use for Issue On Which He Is "Most Concerned"

Respondents were asked what environmental issue they were most concerned about. Those naming an issue were then asked what source they would use in seeking information on that issue. There were 224 responses (those who had a "most concerned" issue and could name a source they would use).

Source:	Conservation Groups	Daily Papers	Radio-TV	Other Media	Other
Percent: of 224	54	2	0	18	24

It is indicated so far that activists seem to turn primarily to conservation groups for information, and not to the mass media. One might assume that Sierra Club members, whose organization is noted for its excellent publications, would tend more than other activists to name a "conservation group" source (this being their own). However, respondents specifically named other conservation groups as frequently as the Sierra Club. The most typical response was to name the conservation group most identified with a particular environmental problem.

The "other" category, which often rated second to clubs as a source of information, consisted largely of highly specific sources, such as technical journals available to professionals in fields having practical aspects relative to conservation, or individuals known to be well informed on a particular subject (e.g., biology professors, engineers, etc.).

An earlier Bay Area study undertaken as an engineering dissertation indicated *general-public* dissatisfaction, in 1968, with local conservation information sources, including mass media.

Gene E. Willeke studied "Effects of Water Pollution in San Francisco Bay" in a Stanford project on engineering-economic planning (EEP-29), concluded in October 1968. In that study 914 representative Bay Area residents were interviewed in depth in their homes.

Of the interviewees who said they had recently heard something about bay pollution or bay fill, only 10 percent said they would turn to newspapers for further information. Television, radio, and magazines were mentioned by four, three, and two percent, respectively.

This is compared with 18 percent for local politicians, 17 percent for local agencies, 13 percent for state agencies, eight percent for higher-level politicians, seven percent for conservation organizations or meetings, five percent for libraries and a number of other sources.

Going further, 58 percent said they were not receiving as much information about bay pollution or bay fill as they would like, 39 percent were satisfied, two percent had no answer.

Yet the interviewees laid "responsibility . . . to see that the public gets information about the Bay" to these sources: newspapers, 42 percent; radio and television, 41 percent; magazines, 14 percent; civic and conservation groups, 40 percent; local government, 55 percent; state government, 44 percent.

It should be noted that these figures are for a representative cross-section of the total Bay Area population, rather than being limited to the group defined here as activists.

Another survey, of a different type of special-interest group, showed in what way the mass media are being utilized. Donald Shaw and Paul Van Nevel reported in *Journalism Quarterly*, August 1967, their investigation of whether mass media medical science stories keep doctors, researchers and the general public alert to new developments in the medical field.

A mail questionnaire to University of Wisconsin medical school faculty asked, "Do you ever get information about new research developments within your own specialty from the public media?"

Sixty percent of the respondents said they "sometimes" picked up information within their own specialties; of these, 92 percent reported it was from newspapers, general magazines, or both; two percent said it was from radio or TV; and six percent said it was from books and specialized magazines.

The researchers concluded that, with more than 6,000 medical journals in the world, it is hard for medical men to keep up just within their own specialties, and that perhaps the mass media serve as a sort of "index" to journal reading.

If so, mass media decision-makers would be seen in an important gatekeeper role, insofar as they perform this alerting function.

And if so for medical news, why not for conservation news? If mass media cannot be expected to provide the depth coverage activists want, could they not at least serve as alerting sources?

They apparently do not fulfill even that function for Bay Area environmental activists. Witness the results on the question which should have given some indication of use of media for "alerting," if for nothing else (thus relieving media of too much responsibility, considering the fact that our "activists" would turn, after being alerted, to the more detailed, conservation-oriented sources they know beyond the mass media).

Factor Prompting Information-Seeking

The 149 persons who said they had sought information on a conservation issue recently were asked, "Did anything in particular prompt you to seek that information?" Results:

84%: either "general concern" or "nothing in particular"
5%: all media (papers, 3%; radio, TV, 1%; magazines, 1%)
2%: conservation organizations
8%: individuals and "other"

Although the results presented so far have indicated a pattern of non-use of the mass media, and thus apparent dissatisfaction with mass media among environmental activists (corroborated to some extent for the general public by Willeke), another recent study has shown some *general-public* use of mass media for conservation information.

Leland W. Robinson, a graduate student in the Sociology department of Northwestern University, in an unpublished report of October 1970, describes his study of "Public Awareness of, Attitudes Toward and Sources of Information Concerning Environmental Pollution" in the Chicago area. In-depth interviews were conducted with a selected sample of 278 Chicago residents from four representative areas.

Of the sample, 258 had awareness of pollution as a major problem. These interviewees listed use of the following media for conservation information: newspapers, 81 percent; television, 71 percent; magazines, 50 percent; radio, 37 percent; books, eight percent. These results, however, came from leading questions like, "Have you read any newspaper articles that have been good sources of information about pollution?", rather than giving the respondent freedom to answer the question of what he uses most or might turn to for information.

The same 258 were asked, "How did you first become interested in the pollution problem?" Responses:

44%: first-hand experience
23%: newspapers
22%: television
21%: media (unspecified)
13%: individuals
22%: other

Another study indicates even more clearly that the ecology activists differ from the general public in environmental information-seeking. Arvin W. Murch, reporting in the Spring 1971 issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly,* studied "Public Concern for Environmental Issues" with a random sample of 300 Durham, North Carolina residents.

His survey asked, "Do you recall reading or hearing about pollution or damage to the environment recently? If so, where?" He was asking about information reaching respondents unsought, as well as information which was sought, but his results are interesting when compared to the Sierra Club study.

Ninety-three percent of Murch's 205 respondents named sources (some naming multiple sources) as follows:

73%: television
62%: local newspapers
37%: magazines
21%: friends
12%: other

Murch's survey contained another query, the responses to which may explain the difference between our "activists" and the general public, as well as indicate a possible explanation for activists' not using Bay Area media for environmental information. Of Murch's 205 respondents, 74 percent rated pollution a very serious problem nationally versus 13 percent rating it serious locally; nine percent rated pollution a moderate national problem versus 49 percent rating it a moderate problem locally; zero percent rated pollution a minor problem nationally versus 21 percent rating it a minor problem locally.

Clearly, as focus shifts toward the national, concern mounts. Yet according to Murch, "Objective data indicate Durham shares most of the nation's environmental problems." Murch suggests two reasons for this apparent local partial blindness.

He quotes Ido de Groot ("Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Air Pollution," *Journal of the Air Pollution Control Association,* v. 17, 1967) concerning a "denial system" at work, in which the closer a person admits the problem is to himself, the more he feels he must act on it (and so the less he wants to admit the problem is nearby). Murch also suggests that the mass media's national focus in the Durham area (which he backs up with figures) gives the impression the problem is greater nationally. Since, he says, environmental concern stems mainly from media, then national-focused media bring national-focused concern.

But environmental activists are most likely those persons who have risen above the local "denial system" described by de Groot, and have accepted the fact that there is a problem in their own back yards.

Local media are not covering environment fully at the local level, yet are covering environment extensively. This could indicate an explanation for use of mass media by the general public and non-use by activists, assuming the studies brought together here supplement one another. This is also an explanation for the fact that the activists largely rate Bay Area mass media above-adequate on environmental coverage.

Stated Opinion of Area Media Environmental Coverage

Respondents were asked to rate Bay Area mass media in general on environmental coverage. No rating was given by 6 percent, who felt unqualified or could not generalize.

Rating:	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Percent: of 301	5	36	32	20	1

Identification of One Medium As Superior on Environmental Coverage

Respondents were asked if any medium was in general "exceptionally better" than the others on environmental coverage.

45%: no medium is exceptionally better.

Of the remaining 55%:

33%: named a radio station or a newspaper, with no particular one receiving a significant number of mentions.

67%: named a television station. Virtually all these mentions were KQED, channel 9, the non-commercial station.

The explanations given before might also explain why half (49 percent) of the respondents replied "no" to the question, "Do you know a more up-to-date source of ecology news and information than the mass media?" The half which apparently thinks mass media are most up-to-date does not necessarily use them. They may be simply acknowledging that no other form of mass communication has the immediacy of radio and television, or the daily appearance of the newspaper.

Sources Called "More Up-to-Date" Than Mass Media

The 51 percent of ecology activists naming sources more up-to-date than the mass media named the following:

Source:	Conservation Groups	Individuals	Government	University	Other
Percent: of 151	76	14	4	6	2

Ecology activists want to know more than what happened at last night's board meeting. They want to know, for example, of an official change in power plant siting plans before the change is announced. The media are not likely to report such events until or unless they achieve some sort of "prominence," perhaps through citizen-created controversy.

Yet where might activists best learn the things they need to know, and how might the generally inert public be aroused, so that all those issues which should become prominent do indeed become so? The answer is of course the mass media.

There are other characteristics of the ecology activist which lead to a tendency to rely more on specialized sources of knowledge than on the mass media. They are above-average in education and occupation. (Cross-tabulations on demographic information showed no significant interrelationships with other variables.) We found the following:

Occupation

(All those listing "none" were either recently laid-off or retired)

	Professional, Executive	Office	Blue Collar	Housewife	Student	None	Other
Percent:	49	19	3	13	14	3	1

Years of School Completed

("High school" includes those still in high school)

Years:	High School	Some College	College	MA	PhD	20+
Percent: of 301	11	12	19	41	12	6

Age

Age:	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Percent: of 301	8	15	30	21	16	7	2

Length of Time Lived in Bay Area

Years:	1-5	6-10	11-20	20+
Percent: of 301	15	20	23	41

Mass Medium Most Used by Respondents

Respondents were asked where they got most of their general daily news.

Source:	Newspapers	Television	Radio	Radio & TV & Papers	Radio & TV	People	Other
Percent: of 301	51	9	5	24	1	2	8

The demographics, and the finding that the majority depend on the print media for news, are best explained by the general public affairs and science information-seeking patterns found by Wilbur Schramm and Serena Wade ("The Mass Media as Sources of Public Affairs, Science, and Health Knowledge," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1969):

"Newspapers and magazines are used more than television as sources of public knowledge of science."

"Print is more likely than television to be used as a source of public knowledge about health."

"Better-educated persons and persons with higher income are more likely than others to seek science information from more than one source."

The Schramm and Wade study was based on data from four carefully made surveys of public affairs knowledge and its sources, drawn between 1952 and 1964. It leads to another explanation of why the Sierra Club sample does not use the mass media for environmental concerns: the activists are well-educated and financially well off. They tend, then, to have knowledge of, and to use, multiple sources in their information-seeking. (Since the Schramm and Wade study was made with data gathered before the ecology boom, it did not distinguish environmental information-seeking. Its results on science and health information-seeking seem applicable, however.) Having used sources other than the mass media, and conditioned by education to seek further than popular sources, the activists apparently tend to ignore the mass media, preferring simply to go straight to the best source. Thus even the possible "alerting" function mentioned earlier is unimportant.

There were several questions in the survey designed to test "commitment."

Respondents' "Commitment" to Ecology

Number of environmental groups supported:

66% – 1
30% – 2-4

Time since joining first environmental group:

53% – less than four years
25% – 4-9 years
20% – more than 9 years

Reason for first joining Sierra Club:

41% – ecology interest
28% – camping, hiking interest
29% – both of above

Offices and committee chairmanships held in conservation groups during past year:

94% – 0
6% – 1 or more

Number of conservation meetings or activities attended in past year:

52% – 0
40% – 1-10
8% – 11 or more

From these results come a group that can be called "exceptional." They are defined as those who had: supported five or more ecology groups; and/or held committee chairmanships or offices in ecology groups in the past year; and/or attended more than 20 conservation-related activities in the past year; and/or held some responsible community office or exceptionally ecology-oriented occupation. The latter categories included at least one municipal supervisor, a port authority member, and several professional ecology researchers and academicians in closely allied fields. These were culled out as ones whose opinions and ideas would probably carry extra weight in environmentalist circles. If the two-stage theory of information flow is valid at all, these are the persons who would be the intermediaries between the large sources–media, etc.–and the public (in this case, "the public" of conservation activists).

Data from this "exceptional" set, which totaled 33 respondents, was analyzed separately. They showed one significant difference from the general total; there was much more reliance on sources of information so specific they could be coded only as "other." They showed a slight reliance on media, but more preference to turn to "other" sources than to clubs.

"Exceptional" Respondents Sources of Ecology Information

Source:	Club	Paper	Radio-TV	Other Media	Other
Exceptional:	42	0	0	12	33
Others: (by percent)	53	6	1	11	13

(The most common reply to the question of usual information source from "exceptional" respondents was: "There is no usual source. Name a particular problem and I'll tell you a particular source.")

Sources Most Recently Used By "Exceptional" Respondents

On the information-seeking question, of the 149 respondents who could name a source they had recently turned to, 26 belonged to the "exceptional" category.

Source:	Club	Paper	Radio-TV	Other Media	Other
Percent:	23	0	0	35	42

Similar questions on the survey gave similar results for the "exceptionals." Clearly, they are still less likely to use the daily mass media than are the regular conservationists, and are more likely to turn to specialized sources matching specialized problems.

Conclusions

Based on this study of Sierra Club members, and what is known about information-seeking behavior by elites and the general public on science, health, and environmental issues, it seems safe to conclude that on

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Conclusions

Based on this study of Sierra Club members, and what is known about information-seeking behavior by elites and the general public on science, health, and environmental issues, it seems safe to conclude that on local issues in the Bay Area, the eco-activist does not rely on the mass media either for specific information or to alert him to developments in his field of interest.*

Given that 84 percent of the activists sampled were unable to name a specific source which prompted them to seek information on an environmental subject, it is also likely that a sizable number use the mass media in a general way to alert them to trends in environmental deterioration or repair. Certainly on a national level the news media are the most important source of this type of information for the general public.

But for specific information, and the day-to-day alerting which is necessary for any citizen to participate effectively in the legislative process, the activist relies on his club and other special interest groups; on specialized publications such as technical journals and government reports; and on his colleagues and academicians. It seems likely that the general public, not involved actively in environmental problems, does not look anywhere for this type of information, and would not find it in the mass media if it did. (See Chapter Chapter IV for a complete discussion of this point.)

That activists do not denigrate local media performance is probably attributable to the fact that they do not expect such detailed (politically useful) information from the media. The results of the Willeke study indicate strongly that the public at large still expects the news media to provide such information (even if they do not make use of it); but those who are active have abandoned this notion.

The implications of these findings for Bay Area print and broadcast news executives are clear. If they continue to maintain the increased coverage given to The Environment as indicated in Chapter II, they will provide a satisfactory, overall picture of the quality of life. They may also convert a portion of the politically inert general public into activists (that is, members of some conservation or ecology group) if a specific environmental problem occurs locally which demands depth coverage (such as the oil spill on San Francisco Bay in January 1971 which resulted from the collision of two Standard Oil of California tankers. That spill, and the resultant media coverage, may have done more to convert non-activists into activists than all the increased coverage of the environment as a whole since 1969.)

If news executives, however, wish to speak more directly to the eco-activist, they must give much more prominence and attention to day-to-day coverage of political and economic battles being waged over specific problems. They must approach the environment as a news story with the same vigor and enthusiasm and manpower as they do local sporting news. And this is not likely to happen. Indeed, the occasional coverage which creates converts is itself an important and worthy goal. Perhaps no more should be expected.

To editors of conservation publications, and staff members who work in the club offices, the results of this study (plus what was found in Chapter I) are also clear. Both activists and environmental reporters are relying heavily on the clubs for information. A high priority of all clubs should be the collection and dissemination of specific information about local environmental problem areas to those who request it. If they do not take on this function, the media will not take up the slack.

So far as is known, no Eleventh Commandment exists which precludes the mass news media from getting into the trenches with industry, conservationists, and politicians and reporting "in depth" those stories of local interest. On occasion they do. But over the long haul, a number of institutional factors make it difficult for the media to cover this subject–not all of them related to problems within the media themselves. The next chapter details the difficulties the news media have had–and will continue to have unless help is provided and conventions change–in improving the *quality*, not just the quantity, of environmental news.

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*Chapter V presents data on public exposure to environmental advertisements and news stories about the environmental problems discussed in those advertisements.

Chapter Four

THE ENVIRONMENT: A DIFFICULT SUBJECT TO COVER

Topflight environmental reporting–the kind that would be respected by the environmental activist–is difficult to bring off, for a number of reasons.

The environmental story is not, in a news sense, a "visible" one. Air and water pollution, DDT and mercury poisoning, the human population explosion are all stories which build up slowly, imperceptibly, from day to day, with no specific news pegs on which they can be hung. Because this deterioration is a continuing process, coverage must also be on a continuing basis, and a news executive must have a strong financial commitment to the subject if it is to be reported adequately.

Until recently there had been no environmental group strong enough to lobby with the politicians or the press, and only recently have editors recognized the environment as a legitimate news beat worthy of day-to-day coverage. Such an opposition spokesman (the Sierra Club, for example) is a necessity to stimulating coverage. Opposed to the environmentalists have been the industrialists responsible for much of the pollution. They contribute much of the advertising revenue to the news media, and it takes a courageous editor to actually name the major polluters in his area.

News executives are wary of the environmental story for another reason: if approached without imagination and flair, it can be deathly dull. The environmental story is a difficult one for reporters with little background in chemistry and biology, and it can be equally difficult for science reporters: almost always there are important political and economic and cultural components, along with the scientific facts, which must be reported for a full understanding of the story.

There are other problems for the environment reporter. He has difficulty in sorting out conflicting opinions, in pinning down public agencies, in finding reliable and disinterested authorities; all the while he is being inundated with handouts from conservationists, government agencies, and industries. And he has difficulty finding the time for the study and backgrounding of environmental problems, to make them clear both to himself and to his readers.

Small papers are handicapped even more by these difficulties. In a situation where a single general assignment reporter can comprise as much as a third of the entire news staff, freeing him to cover only environmental stories is not realistic. This often means heavy reliance on the wire services, which does not solve the problem.

The role of the wire service in covering local and regional environmental news is a crucial one, and the wires are still a long way from adequately handling this additional burden. The primary function of a bureau is to gather local news and send it out, statewide or nationally; there is little emphasis on providing local news to *local* newspapers. The responsibility for local news remains primarily that of the local newspaper.

So the wire services are not really prepared to handle much of what can be considered environmental news. The majority of environmental information is of such a local and regional nature–sewage treatment, garbage disposal, factory emissions, and the like–that the wires have little use for it. The result is that very often the small newspaper, and frequently the much larger one, devotes most of its environmental coverage to national problems–using wire service stories on mercury pollution and the latest announcement of the

Environmental Protection Agency—and regularly bypasses the local issues of solid waste disposal, bay fill, and nearby factory pollution.

In this chapter we will consider some of these problems influencing the quality of environmental coverage. We will trace the results of a press conference at which a report on air pollution was released—a particularly appropriate study because so much environmental news is aired via the press conference or the report, and so many of the media, particularly broadcasting, react only to scheduled events.

This will be followed by a discussion of how adequately the mass media cover environmentally harmful aspects of products, services, and comapnies, and of their reluctance to name names of offenders.

The difficulties of covering legislative action on environmental matters will be considered briefly. This will be followed by a look at the amount of public relations material environment reporters receive from industry and environmental groups, and what they do with it.

Still investigating PR efforts, we will report on the sizes of the public relations establishments in favor of, and opposing, the California Water Plan. The final section of the chapter will be the results of a sampling of editorial opinion offered on the subject by media in areas affected by the Water Plan.

POLLUTION, PRESS RELATIONS AND PRESS PERFORMANCE

During the 1969-1970 academic term, an environment story with many ramifications for the Bay Area originated at Stanford University, in a student workshop formed to investigate the area's steadily multiplying air pollution problems. As part of the project, over 70 graduate and undergraduate students scrutinized the machinations of local industries, the almost comic ineptness of governmental regulatory agencies and the bewilderment of individual citizens in the nine counties faced with rapidly deteriorating air quality. "Air Pollution in the San Francisco Bay Area" was the title given the 380-page manuscript assembled by project leader Ned Groth, a Stanford graduate student, and released to the region's press in September 1970. The Groth report was the second in two weeks to give black marks to pollution control efforts in the area, following on the heels of a study conducted by 20 national scientists which criticized the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District (BAAPCD), the local regulatory body, for a "narrow interpretation of its mission, an absence of clearly stated goals and methods to achieve these goals." (These findings, incidentally, were also supported by the Stanford research efforts.)

Local news media received the national report with moderate fanfare. A few papers featured the story on page one, offering the main conclusions with little interpretive commentary. No attempts to follow up on local or regional implications of the report appeared. This partial news vacuum might have been predicted from the history of media coverage of the BAAPCD, which, with a few exceptions, had been relatively sparse. The Bay Area Air Pollution Control District, chartered to monitor air standards and prosecute pollution violations, actually includes only six of the nine Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara. Three northern counties—Napa, Sonoma and Solano—have thus far fought off legislative attempts to include them under the District's jurisdiction, thereby eliminating their status as a haven for industries anxious to avoid stringent pollution controls. However, industrial emissions from these three counties permeate the air basin shared with the other six.

The BAAPCD has statutory responsibility for controlling pollution from *stationary* sources (e.g., industries, power plants, commercial and residential combustion operations); automobiles and other mobile sources are regulated by state and federal agencies. A twelve-member Board of Directors, consisting of two elected public officials (a city councilman and county supervisor) from each county, is appointed to implement policy and determine the pace of regulatory efforts. A Chief Administrative Officer, Advisory Board and various staff members assist the Directors.

The BAAPCD's administrative officers and regulatory policies became the focal point of criticism in the Stanford air pollution report. In essence, the report charged the BAAPCD with "failure to deal effectively with this region's air pollution problems during the past five years." The student researchers claimed that the Control District had been lax in imposing strict restraints on industries, had suffered a "near disaster" in efforts to educate and arouse the public to pollution hazards, and had built up cozy ties with Bay Area corporations while virtually excluding citizens' ecology groups from its decision-making processes.

The Groth report attributed much of the culpability for the BAAPCD's shortcomings to its Board of Directors, on grounds that the Board had "taken a go-slow approach to problems, and has been resistant to reform." This assertion was underscored by elaborate sketches of each Director's behavior. About former Board member William C. Blake of San Francisco, for example, the report charged that, "Except when there was political hay to be made, Blake exhibited an insensitivity to citizen complaints that bordered on oblivion." Robert B. St. Clair of San Mateo County was criticized for blind devotion to the cause of local industry: "He has consistently resisted the proposal that the District needs to tighten its rules in order to meet new state standards. St. Clair was vehemently opposed to the disclosure of pollution data on specific firms." The report also had words of praise for certain Board members, including Chairman Victor Calvo of Santa Clara County, who "seems quite mindful of the public interest" in his advocacy of tougher restraints on industry and inclusion of conservationists on the District's Advisory Council. The sketches were topped by the assigning of a rating ("good," "fair" or "poor") to each man for both his "attitudes" and "performance." Similarly detailed studies were included for the District's Administrative Officer and Advisory Council members. A generally optimistic prognosis for the BAAPCD's future was offered in the report, however, based upon significant membership changes in the Board of Directors and subtle shifts in policy which had occurred shortly prior to the report's publication.

In another major section, the Groth report included case studies of over 30 industries in the Bay region frequently cited for violations of BAAPCD regulations. Detailed descriptions of the processes and air pollution problems of oil refineries, steel mills, cement plants, chemical manufacturers, and numerous other operations were provided. Most of the studies were based on tours of the particular companies, where student researchers examined pollution control devices and interviewed company officials. The researchers concluded that, although industry had made significant advances in lessening and even halting some forms of pollution, the business community "moved only as far and as fast as required by law" and "still has a long way to go."

The case studies of industry ought to have been immensely interesting to the news media. Much of the information about individual companies was being "made public" for the first time; in fact, industry had fought the release of emissions figures for several major pollutants when the BAAPCD had considered making the information available earlier in the year. The students also captured many of the corporate executives in moments of rare candor; for instance, this excerpt from the section on Standard Oil of California's Richmond refinery:

> "Mr. Coleman (coordinator of the plant's pollution control programs) was deeply concerned about the possible stringency of new regulations that were in the process of being drafted by the BAAPCD to meet new state air quality standards...The Oil company officials showed a general distrust and antipathy toward the public, especially active groups demanding clean air, some of which have attacked Standard as a major polluter. Mr. Coleman feels that the public is relatively uninformed and unable to understand many of the problems of the refinery. He distrusts the emotionalism which he feels prevails in the political arena of air pollution control; he would much prefer to have all decisions based on sound technical and engineering information.

An interview with an official of FMC (Food, Machinery and Chemical) Corp. of Richmond, a company that manufactures products ranging from agricultural equipment to weapons systems, uncovered the following business philosophy:

> While a visit to the plant revealed no serious air pollution problems, discussion with Mr. McDannald, production manager, was very interesting. He was unwilling to acknowledge that DDT (or any of the other products) had any damaging effect on the environment, and expressed the company philosophy that as long as people would buy their products, FMC would continue to make and sell them. As manufacturers of a wide line of agricultural chemicals, FMC (Niagara) seemed to have little feeling of responsibility for the potentially damaging ecological effects of their products.

The students also pointed out several cases in which Bay Area industries, acting through their local lobbying organization, had actively participated in BAAPCD rule-making procedures—usually to voice strong opposition to proposals for more stringent curbs on pollution.

If the region's media ignored all else about the Groth report, the BAAPCD evaluations (with the fingering of local political figures) and the portraits of area industries should have provided sufficient fodder to keep the Bay Area's journalistic artillery booming for several days. In addition to these major sections, the Groth report included:

–An "overview" of the composition of air pollution in the area, broken down into a list of specific pollutants by source and concentration.

–Results of two public opinion surveys conducted among Bay Area residents to determine their sentiments about pollution problems and to assess their willingness to aid in improving the environment. Among other findings, the surveys disclosed that the public was well aware of pollution sources, but generally unable to identify specific political mechanisms (e.g., complaining to the BAAPCD) for remedial assistance; most respondents wanted tougher regulation of polluters and strict enforcement of such laws; and a large majority said they would voluntarily foot the bill for cleaner air, at an average of $5.00 a month per household.

–Specific suggestions for citizens' groups and individuals desiring to become "environmental activists," including methods of dealing with regulatory agencies, descriptions of proposed legislation affecting the area's pollution situation, and "things that individuals and groups can do about their own life styles."

Press Relations: "Selling" Environmental Information to the Media

When the manuscript of "Air Pollution in the San Francisco Bay Area" neared completion, Groth and other project leaders wrestled with the dual dilemma of synthesizing the findings for presentation to the media and stimulating media interest in the report so that widespread coverage might occur. The aid of the Stanford University News Service was enlisted, and a series of press releases were drawn up summarizing the major features of the report in news story format. Also, to provide newsmen with a "peg" on the story, a press conference/pseudo-event was scheduled for the report's release date, Thursday, September 10, 1970.

Five press releases (slugged for release in the September 10 PMs) presented a synopsis of major sections of the report dealing with the BAAPCD, pollution problems of local industries, and the public opinion poll results. A pair of sub-topics from the report were also described in press releases: (1) the multi-faceted environmental impact of the automobile (including "endless miles of ugly and expensive highways, the loss of thousands of acres of productive soil under blacktop each year, more than 50,000 deaths and millions of injuries on the highways annually, the aesthetic blight of junkyards, noise and other psychological stresses"), which student researchers had asserted was too overwhelming to be contained by "band-aid approaches" and could only be dealt with by the elimination of the private-passenger vehicle; and (2) miscellaneous pollution sources (i.e., other than automobiles and industry) which contribute to the overall deterioration of air quality in the Bay region. These sub-topics lacked the "sensational" elements of the sections of the report concerned with local politics and industry, but nonetheless were suitable for individual stories, or for "sidebars" to the main coverage.

Although press releases were mailed to newspapers and broadcast outlets during the week prior to the press conference, the manuscript itself—all 380 pages—was inexplicably withheld from the media until the morning of the press conference, *on the release date.* A Stanford public relations official tried to justify the last-second distribution of the report on grounds that the News Service "was afraid the release date might be blown, as has happened with several other important stories we've handled." However, most individuals familiar with the routine workings of the press should realize that depositing a lengthy and complicated report in a newsman's hands on the date he must meet a story deadline allows him no time to assimilate the report's content and usually precludes all but the most haphazard coverage in initial news breaks. The rationale for the decision to withhold the document (as given by the public relations man) seemingly placed novelty or secrecy on a higher rung than the quality of news coverage which would normally be desired—a questionable ordering of priorities which, we shall suggest, may have influenced the amount and depth of media coverage.

Journalists from a half dozen of the largest newspapers in the Bay Area, along with a scattering of radio and television reporters and cameramen, staffed the conference in the chambers of Stanford's Board of Trustees in San Francisco. Other media in the area fell back upon the traditional alternatives of relying upon wire service copy, rewriting verbatim Stanford press releases, or totally ignoring the Groth report and its many ramifications. The panel of speakers for the conference was selected to provide the media with immediate access to varying points of view about the report. The group included Groth and Calvo; Eveleth E. Hayden, Executive Vice President of the Bay Area League of Industrial Associations (BALIA), the major lobbying and public relations arm of the region's industries; and Mrs. Douglas Lord, chairman of "Stop Smog Committee," a Richmond citizens' conservation organization.

For the bulk of his remarks, Groth pointed out highlights of the report, launching a specific attack on automobiles which culminated in his advocating the eventual elimination of private passenger vehicles, a proposal voiced in the report. Groth's comments about the BAAPCD were given nodding acquiescence (and little else) by Calvo, who promised that the pollution report would be "studied carefully" by District officers. Hayden (sometimes referred to, with only slight exaggeration, as "the thirteenth member of the Board" because of his continual presence at BAAPCD meetings) vouched for the desire of Bay Area industries to halt environmental deterioration, but warned that pollution control should not proceed in a way that would jeopardize the region's overall goals for economic and social development.

The predominant mood of most newsmen present at the conference was one of passivity (perhaps even boredom). In its past coverage of the BAAPCD, the media had displayed a strange reluctance to go beyond reporting mere surface facts, and the questions posed by reporters at the Groth press conference seemed geared to a repeat performance. Indeed, the only aggressive (and intelligent) questioning came from Tom Harris, environmental writer for the San Jose *Mercury*, who has covered affairs of the BAAPCD more extensively than any other Bay Area reporter. Harris' rancor was noticeably aroused when BALIA lobbyist Hayden began to paint a rosy picture of industry's concerted efforts to curb its own pollution–a hefty spoon-feeding of public relations verbiage which no other newsmen challenged, even if they mentally dismissed it. With several needling questions, Harris punctured Hayden's inflated contentions, in the most spirited interchange of the conference–a dialogue which was missed by most of the television and radio media, whose crews left the conference in its early phases.

This hasty exodus by the electronic media is a revealing example of a familiar pattern. With the exception of presidential or gubernatorial press conferences, television and radio crews seldom dawdle at such affairs. They move in equipment, set up, obtain usable footage, and then pack their gear and exit hurriedly (usually noisily disrupting the entire proceedings). A time element thus becomes a determinant of whether material from a press conference will be covered on broadcast news programs: anything happening after the first 15 or 20 minutes may have a considerably lower probability of being covered than material occurring earlier in the session. This apparent tendency ought to be noted and carefully considered by an information source engaged in planning the internal schedule of a press conference.

In addition, reporters staffing the conference for local broadcast media were not "regular" on the environmental beat, as were several of the newspaper writers (Tom Harris of the *Mercury*, Paul Peterzell of the San Rafael *Independent-Journal* and others). Consequently, the broadcast reporters seemed to have greater problems in dealing with the complexities of the ecological issues under discussion. It may be hazardous to generalize from this specific conference that, in a larger context, the broadcast media are not developing and utilizing environmental news specialists to the same extent as their newspaper counterparts; nothing in our data bears out that point. At least one reporter, however–Ken Castle, an environmental writer for the Fremont *Argus*–commented that, at environmental conferences he has covered, television and radio staffers "don't even know intelligent questions to ask." In their Groth conference coverage, the broadcast media also favored film segments featuring their own "man-at-the-scene," even when his questions were hardly informative. The remark of one broadcast correspondent, who asked Ned Groth to "sum up your report, for the benefit of television and radio, in about ten seconds," seems to bear out Castle's assessment that broadcast reporters often search for "nice, simplistic statements" that will easily conform to the time limitations of their particular news format. We shall address each of these points at greater length in our concluding comments about the impact of the individual reporter on a medium's environmental news coverage.

The Groth report researchers conducted a review of past press coverage of BAAPCD affairs and claimed that, for much of the organization's history, the media's reporting was "abominable."

> Few papers bothered to send reporters to meetings; those that did seldom made it a regular assignment for one reporter, so that few journalists developed the degree of familiarity with the issues needed to provide good interpretations of events.

Even when the media awakened to the rising national popularity of the ecology movement and became more willing to cover environmental stories *before* they became controversial, editors persisted in relegating the BAAPCD to the inside pages of the paper and the bottom side of broadcast news programs unless a controversial element could be found. The Groth report comments:

> To some extent, this failing on the part of the news media represents an abandonment of their responsibility to keep the public informed. Most people cannot go to BAAPCD meetings themselves, but rely instead on the press to report important events. The media should serve a watchdog role in regard to regulatory agencies; they should keep an eye on things and report what is happening, and at the same time be critical in their reportage, to insure that the agency is responsive to the public interest . . .
>
> One might ask: if the media don't get the facts out, and the District cannot or will not, how are the people to know what's going on?

Part of the blame for the vapid nature of the coverage probably ought to be affixed to the District itself; a "somewhat arrogant attitude" on the part of certain BAAPCD officials, the Stanford researchers charged, continually impaired press relations. Former Chairman Laurence Kelly, for instance, "always took pains to point out to any reporters present at meetings the things they should include in their stories to make the BAAPCD look good." In addition, the BAAPCD until fairly recently actively sought to keep its policies as clandestine as possible–and it eventually became an invisible organization. A share of the blame should perhaps rest with the Bay Area media's audiences for not demanding a greater attentiveness by the mass media to BAAPCD affairs, since a media's audience has a quasi-responsibility for the "quality" of its press; however, the Groth report public opinion poll indicated that 90 percent of the Bay Area residents were not even aware of the BAAPCD's existence. It seems, therefore, that the bulk of the responsibility for the shoddy coverage of the District must rest ultimately with the media, which attempted little investigation or interpretation of BAAPCD policies for improving the region's air quality.

The previous remarks, admittedly general, are meant to provide some historical perspective on the coverage given the BAAPCD by Bay Area print and broadcast media prior to the release of the Stanford air pollution report in September 1970. With this background in mind, the remainder of this section will specifically focus on media treatment of the Groth report. Although a major chapter of that document dealt with BAAPCD administrative structures, the report also considered several other aspects of the Bay Area's pollution problems, as we have indicated, and consequently there were other "angles" the media might have selected for reporting.

To assess newspaper coverage, a content analysis was conducted of 28 dailies in the nine Bay counties, for a period beginning September 9 (the day before the press conference) and ending September 15. Table I indicates the papers in the sample and provides information on the quantity, duration and prominence of their coverage. In addition to these measures, the absence or presence in the coverage of ten "thematic issues" prominently featured in the Groth report was also determined, with results for that analysis offered in Tables II and III. Assessing television and radio handling of the report was hampered by the absence of a great amount of "hard" data. Therefore, our remarks on coverage by the electronic media have a less rigorous scientific grounding than those pertaining to newspaper coverage, and the reader should regard them as somewhat more tenuous. (For a detailed explanation of methodology, see Appendix IV.)

Table I

STANFORD AIR POLLUTION REPORT: SUMMARY OF COVERAGE IN 28 BAY AREA DAILIES, SEPTEMBER 9-15, 1970

Paper (County)*	Col. inches	No. days in paper	No.days pages 1-3
Fremont *Argus* (Alameda)	88	2	2
San Jose *Mercury* (Santa Clara)	71	2	1
San Rafael *Independent-Journal* (Marin)	68	2	2
Hayward *Review* (Alameda)	39	2	1
Livermore *Herald & News* (Alameda)	32	1	0
Oakland *Tribune* (Alameda)	32	1	0
Alameda *Times-Star* (Alameda)	29	1	1
Fremont *News-Register* (Alameda)	29	1	1
San Leandro *Morning News* (Alameda)	23	1	1
San Francisco *Examiner* (San Francisco)	21	1	0
Pittsburg *Post-Dispatch* (Contra Costa)	18	1	0
Antioch *Ledger* (Contra Costa)	15	1	1
San Francisco *Chronicle* (San Francisco)	13	1	0
San Mateo *Times* (San Mateo)	12	1	1
Contra Costa *Times & Green Sheet* (Contra Costa)	11	1	1
Berkeley *Gazette* (Alameda)	10	1	0
San Jose *News* (Santa Clara)	8	1	0

*Papers carrying no coverage of the Stanford report:

Redwood City *Tribune* (San Mateo)
Palo Alto *Times* (Santa Clara)
Vallejo *Times-Herald* (Solano)
Vallejo *News-Chronicle* (Solano)
Fairfield-Suisun *Daily Republic* (Solano)
Napa *Register* (Napa)
Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat* (Sonoma)
Petaluma *Argus-Courier* (Sonoma)
Concord Daily *Transcript* (Contra Costa)
Martinez *Morning News-Gazette* (Contra Costa)
Richmond *Independent* (Contra Costa)

Table II

PRESENTATION OF SELECTED THEMATIC ISSUES IN DAILIES COVERING THE STANFORD AIR POLLUTION REPORT

Paper	No. of issues presented
San Rafael *Independent-Journal*	8
San Jose *Mercury*	7
Oakland *Tribune*	6
Livermore *Herald & News*	5
Fremont *News-Register*	4
Pittsburg *Post-Dispatch*	4
San Jose *News*	4
Antioch *Ledger*	3
Contra Costa *Times*	3
Fremont *Argus*	3
Hayward *Review*	3
San Francisco *Chronicle*	3
Alameda *Times-Star*	2
Berkeley *Gazette*	2
San Francisco *Examiner*	2
San Leandro *Morning News*	2
San Mateo *Times*	2

Maximum n = 10

Table III

NUMBER OF DAILIES PRESENTING INDIVIDUAL THEMATIC ISSUES IN COVERAGE

Thematic Issue	No. papers presenting issue
BAAPCD ineffectiveness	12
Public opinion poll results	10
Industrial attitudes about pollution control	8
Environmental impact of auto and/or new transportation systems	7
Miscellaneous pollution sources	7
Evaluation of BAAPCD Board and/or Advisory Council	7
Industrial involvement in BAAPCD	5
Local industries' performance*	3
Local BAAPCD Directors' performance†	3
Suggested activities for public	2

Maximum n = 28

*Not applicable to papers in Marin, Napa and Sonoma counties

†Not applicable to papers in Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties

Newspaper Coverage

The Stanford air pollution report may have shed light on environmental problems in the Bay Area, but most local newspapers left their audiences in the dark. Of the 28 dailies included in our analysis, 11 carried *no* coverage of the Groth report in any form during the week-long sample period. Six of this group represent the entire collection of papers in Solano, Napa and Sonoma counties, the triumvirate which has steadfastly opposed joining the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District. The six papers received press releases and at least one wire service account (both Associated Press and United Press International filed a story), but all failed to run the story, possibly for lack of a local angle in the Groth report's critique of the BAAPCD, or because only one of the industries cited in the report for pollution violations is located in the northernmost Bay region—the Standard Oil of New Jersey refinery in Benicia, Solano County. Still, the six papers with a combined readership of over 100,000 owed their audience some account of factors in the study which had regional importance. The news judgment which would simply disregard such information at best commits a journalistic gaffe, and at worst betrays the responsibility to its public.

Of the remaining five papers carrying no coverage, two publish in communities almost directly adjacent to the Stanford campus: the Redwood City *Tribune* and the Palo Alto *Times*. Environmental coverage in the *Tribune* seemed on the upswing in the mid-sixties, when an enterprising reporter named Bruce Brugmann penned a series of stories called "Point of No Return" which graphically illustrated how proposed development of Bay tidelands could wreak ecological havoc. Brugmann's crusading journalism did not ingratiate him to the *Tribune* management, however, which gave editorial support to the tideland developers. Brugmann departed the *Tribune*, under pressure, in 1966, to begin the *Bay Guardian*, an aggressively muckraking monthly published in San Francisco. Since then, the *Tribune*'s environmental coverage has lost the verve of the Brugmann era and become relatively indistinguishable from that found in other community papers in the area. Given this background, the daily's non-coverage of the Groth report (which gave black marks to chemical and cement manufacturing companies in Redwood City) was not especially surprising. More perplexing was the strange silence of the Palo Alto *Times*.

The *Times* generally provides a balanced perspective on environmental issues and a sympathetic forum for local ecology organizations' grievances. However, the paper failed to print even a press release about the Groth report during the sample period. On September 16 (the day after the sampling concluded), an editorial entitled "Test your IQ as a smog fighter" appeared in the *Times* utilizing results from the Groth report's public opinion polls as the basis for a series of ecological brain-teasers ("Would you pay $5 a month to help clean the air?"). The *Times* editorial delivered a lukewarm compliment to the "data-laden" Stanford report, calling it "a very useful public document," but took a verbal swipe at the students for what the editors implied were disguised political motives:

> ...contradictions and a crusading tone in the student report reflect the mixed motives of team leader Ned Groth and others. They seem torn between being rigorously scientific observers and ardent political players—a difficult doubling in the roles of expert and advocate, but possibly one needed to meet the environmental crises of our times.

No news stories appeared in the *Times* to explain the substance of the report or to clarify the implication that the researchers were "ardent political players." Meanwhile, the *Times* that week gave extensive coverage, with a lavish photographic spread, to the Miss Los Altos Beauty Pageant ("Beauties to discuss ecology," September 18, page 3), an affair which ingeniously merged pulchritude and pollution in speech-making by its ten young competitors. Environmental problems "ranging from air pollution to the conservation of fur-bearing animals" were deliberated. (One high school coed, for example, "who likes Mexican food and loves to dance [discussed] the increasing problem of solid waste disposal.")

The Richmond *Independent,* Concord *Daily Transcript* and Martinez *Morning-News-Gazette* fill out the list of papers which did not cover the Groth report. The three represent half of the dailies published in Contra Costa County, the East Bay industrial complex which contains a nucleus of the region's most notorious air and water polluters. The county's environmental havoc is created by an almost unbroken string of heavy manufacturing plants and oil refineries that line the coast from Richmond to Antioch–industries which blight the Bay's waters and spew noxious fumes into the atmosphere. The county has a per capita rate of particulate emissions (i.e., all solid particles and liquid droplets) which is twice the average for the rest of the Bay Area (and four times that of less-industrialized Marin County), according to 1968 air quality data cited in the Stanford report. Over 90 percent of sulfur oxide emissions in the Bay Area and more than half of the non-vehicular emissions of nitrous oxides (a leading catalyst in the complex reaction which produces photochemical smog) are generated from the county's industries. Contra Costa also contains five of the six oil refineries in the region, with the sixth just across the Carquinez Straits in Solano County. These behemoth petroleum operations are major sources of particulates, sulfur oxides, hydrocarbons and unpleasant odors in the Bay Area, according to BAAPCD air quality data.

Protests about the highly visible industrial pollution in Contra Costa County are sporadically lodged with the BAAPCD, most frequently by conservation groups in Richmond, which contains four of the 29 companies listed in the Groth report for excessive violations of regulations. Although the Groth report revealed that many of these individuals' fears were definitely justified, the Richmond *Independent*, a politically conservative daily with the largest circulation in the county, carried no coverage of the Stanford study, which depicted Richmond as the worst pollution pocket in the entire region. This "protective reaction" against assaults upon the integrity of local industries is not unique to the *Independent*; other dailies in Contra Costa County have reacted in a similar manner, as a comment in the Groth report suggests:

> Another example of a controversial situation that has never been adequately explained is the loud protests on the part of Richmond citizens, who have been pressing the BAAPCD Board to take action to clean up the air in that city. Again, people were made aware of citizen discontent with the BAAPCD, but few if any papers had previously bothered to investigate the underlying problem–one of the most severe pollution pockets in the Bay Area, caused by a complex of heavy industry in the city of Richmond. When people complain to the District, it's news; *but the fact that they have to live daily with a rather obnoxious pollution problem is not considered newsworthy* (emphasis supplied).

The tiny but energetic monthly Richmond *Freedom News,* on the other hand, devoted the bulk of the "Air Pollution Notes" column in its October issue to the Stanford study. The *Freedom News* summarized several conclusions of the report, printed a photograph from the press conference, and used the story as a lead-in to myriad short items ranging from an acerbic commentary on the BAAPCD's "compromise with industrial lobbyists," to a conjecture by two economists that air pollution significantly shortens a human's lifespan. Elizabeth and Meyer Segal began the *Freedom News* as a competitor of the *Independent* because they believed the Richmond daily was not serving its community by providing information on numerous issues, particularly the pollution generated by Standard Oil Company's Richmond refinery. Tilting at the corporate windmills of the petroleum industry is often a lonely, quixotic battle, but the *Freedom News* has demonstrated that aggressive "digging" on ecological stories can unearth important details which the larger, better-staffed daily papers in the area either overlook or decline to report.

The Groth report coverage in Contra Costa dailies underscores this point. Of the three papers in the county which covered the report, the Pittsburg *Post-Dispatch* (September 11, page 9) and the Antioch *Ledger* (September 11, page 3) simply reprinted the UPI wire story, featuring comments about the automobile and miscellaneous pollution sources but no mention of industrial polluters cited in the Stanford study. The Contra Costa *Times* (September 13, page 2) published a brief re-write of a Stanford press release and quoted an unnamed BAAPCD official who praised the "constructive criticism" of the report. Again, no local industries or political figures were mentioned in the story. A comment by Bill Parker, science reporter for the Richmond *Independent,* illustrates the reluctance of the larger papers to become involved with the mundane aspects of pollution stories. Asked how much time he devotes to ecological reporting, Parker answered, "I'm covering city hall, the city council, the planning commission, redevelopment agency and others. (The *Independent's*) coverage of environmental stories is either through the wire services, or infrequent, when it happens to occur."

Among the 17 papers reporting on the Stanford study, three reporters demonstrated especially high levels of professionalism and perspicacity in the thoughtful, analytical character of their stories: Harris of the *Mercury*, Peterzell of the *Independent-Journal,* and Castle of the *Argus* and *Review* (two jointly-owned dailies). The *Mercury* and *Independent-Journal* led all papers in the number of selected "thematic issues" from the report which were mentioned in coverage (see Table II), and trailed only the *Argus* in total quantity of coverage (measured in column inches; see Table I) devoted to the report.

"Five years of ineffective control efforts" by the BAAPCD in the struggle against pollution were cited by Harris in the lead of his front-page story in the *Mercury* (September 11). The story described: (1) the innate optimism of the Stanford researchers that administrative changes in the BAAPCD's Board of Directors might signal more stringent actions against industrial polluters; (2) the "key efforts" of two Santa Clara County Board members to improve pollution control programs; (3) industrial attitudes towards limiting pollution; and (4) the public opinion poll results. Harris interviewed Board Chairman Calvo at the press conference and included comments from Calvo about the report. He mentioned that Groth had recently been selected to fill an opening on the BAAPCD's Advisory Council on scientific affairs. In its page layout, the *Mercury* aligned the final section of Harris' story with a wire service report that a U.S. Senate committee had acceded to demands of the automobile lobby and agreed to lessen the severity of proposed controls on auto emissions.

Harris' story appeared on Friday; and in its lead editorial Monday ("Smog Fight Goes On," September 14) the *Mercury* reiterated part of the Groth report's recommendations, blasted the BAAPCD for "failing to do the job it was brought into existence to do," and chastised Napa, Sonoma and Solano counties for refusing membership in the BAAPCD. The editorial was skeptical about the optimism expressed in the Groth report for improvements in air quality, insisting that "the facts unfortunately do not bear out this view." And, adopting an unusually aggressive public interest stance (". . . the public wants action, not delays and soothing-syrup press releases on how much cleaner the air is getting . . ."), the *Mercury* suggested that individual citizens ought to seize the initiative in reversing ineffective pollution control policies:

> If the Stanford report underlines one major truth it is this: the public will get results from the BAAPCD if people are willing to invest time, money and attention in improving District performance. The public holds the ultimate power; it must be willing to use it.

Harris contends that the *Mercury* "does a more thorough and consistent job" on reporting environmental affairs than any other paper in California. If there is a shortcoming, Harris says, it lies in the paper's coverage of statewide environmental news, which is too often overshadowed by an emphasis on problems indigenous to the Bay Area.

An ideological commitment to environmental protection is difficult to discern in the *Mercury,* however, because of the existence of a rather strange paradox Although the paper permits Harris a wide leeway to state the case for environmental preservation, it has done little to discourage the proliferation of industry and freeways in San Jose which generated the current critical air pollution problems in that city. (See Chapter VIII for more on this subject.) Harris, whose stories are often given front-page priority, believes the *Mercury* is still more enlightened than other Bay Area dailies who regard ecology as a "news freak" and are "just beginning to understand the true meaning of the environmental problem and its need for precise, long-range coverage."

Peterzell has his own description of the environmental coverage in most newspapers: "blather." "The fact is," Peterzell says, "that news coverage on the day-to-day, around-the-calendar basis, of governmental activities involved in the regulation of pollution and other problems related to the environment is virtually nil." The *Independent-Journal* and the *Mercury* are the "only two papers in the Bay Area covering such agencies regularly, although the (San Francisco) *Examiner* is coming along more." Peterzell covers BAAPCD activities regularly for the *Independent-Journal,* and has often been the *only* reporter to attend meetings of the District's Advisory Council, a 20-man group of "outside experts" which the Board relies upon for technical information and recommendations, and to spotlight that group's influence in District policy-making.

Two of Peterzell's stories about the Groth report were given immediate front-page play in the *Independent-Journal* in the afternoon edition following the press conference. One ("Charges of Failure of Air Pollution") summarized major points of the report, and the other (a three-column story headed "Stanford Team Raps Gnoss on Clean Air Performance") pointed out that Marin County Commissioners had been chided in the Groth report for their ineffectual participation as BAAPCD Directors. Peterzell's lead paragraphs:

> SAN FRANCISCO–Marin County's representatives on the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District board got mixed, but generally low, ratings in a critique of their performances today by Stanford University students.
>
> Supervisor William A. Gnoss was rated "poor on performance" and "fair" on attitude. Gnoss, the only member of the present air board who has served on it since its formation in 1955, was found to have played "a relatively minor role in BAAPCD decisionmaking." Students have described him as "almost toally ineffective."
>
> Former Director John A. Miskimen, who resigned both from the Board and the San Rafael City Council last spring, was rated fair in performance and excellent in attitude. The students knocked Miskimen's rating on performance because he had missed more than 30 percent of the Board's meetings . . .

The *Independent-Journal* stoked the flames the next afternoon (September 11) with another pair of Peterzell's reports. A front-page feature dealt with the charges in the Stanford report that uncontrolled growth of Pacific Gas and Electric Co. in the Bay Area posed severe environmental hazards, because of pollution caused directly by the company's power plants and indirectly by P.G. & E.'s encouraging heavy industry to move into the Bay Area. The second story featured results of the Groth report's opinion polls.

Peterzell's coverage of the pollution report probably required no herculean investigative efforts; most of the information could have been gleaned from a hurried skimming of several sections of the document. However, in his four stories, Peterzell developed a diverse array of news angles and gave *Independent-Journal* readers some sense of the breadth of the Groth report (while other journalists in the area were rewriting press releases). He also emphasized the reprimand of the County Commissioners, pertinent political information for their Marin County constituents. And his follow-up stories, the absence of which in most other Bay Area papers seemed a glaring oversight, maintained the vitality of the Groth report as a news story.

Castle did not attend the press conference announcing the Stanford report, but devoted much of his time that week to "digesting" the document and, especially, the University's press releases. Castle had lofty praise for the releases, pointing out his agreement with other reporters that they could have been run verbatim (!), which he termed "a rare compliment" (deserved, of course, by the University News Service instead of the local reporters, who ought to have tougher standards for their reportorial endeavors). The *Review*, the larger afternoon paper, got the first jump on the story by reprinting part of the Stanford press release about the public opinion poll (September 10); Castle's detailed account of six southern Alameda County industries given "mixed ratings" by the Groth researchers for their pollution control efforts was bannered on page one of the *Argus* the following morning. That story, which Castle had assembled from the Groth report's case studies of Bay Area industries, ran 45 column inches in length–25 of which appeared in the inside news section of that afternoon's *Review*. Castle again snared three columns on the front page of Saturday's *Argus* for a 44-inch story pointing out that daily hydrocarbon emissions from some 10,000 gas stations in the Bay Area were five times greater than those pouring into the air from all the oil refineries in the region. The story also cited other less-recognizable sources of air pollution. The precise nature of Castle's coverage reflects the well-tempered judgment of a reporter given "pretty much free rein" with environmental stories. His three-day stakeout on the front pages of the *Argus* and *Review* is a tribute to his diligence.

Castle covered the story at greater length than any of the other journalists in Alameda County, although all nine Alameda dailies ran at least one story about the Groth report. This contrasts markedly with Contra Costa County where, as we have indicated, three of six papers disregarded the report entirely. However, coverage in the Alameda dailies would hardly draw rave reviews, for all except the Oakland *Tribune* did nothing more enterprising than reprinting one or more press handouts. George Williamson's coverage for the *Tribune*, which appeared promptly in the afternoon edition following the press conference, was an extremely clear summary of the report's highlights, but the *Tribune* did nothing further with the story. (Fred Garrettson, the *Tribune*'s exceptional environment specialist, was on leave-of-absence from the paper when the report was released.) The Alameda *Times-Star* relegated its coverage of the Groth report to page 3 of its Saturday edition, at the bottom of a local news page whose banner story startlingly declared: "Another School Year Gets Going!"

San Francisco's own, the *Chronicle* and *Examiner*, the two papers with the largest combined readership in the Bay Area, brushed aside the findings of the Groth report in two rather perfunctory stories, which perhaps belie the talents of Scott Thurber and Alan Cline, two of the area's more adroit reporters, who staffed the press conference for the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* respectively.

Cline delved into political implications of the report, listing individual evaluations given fourteen BAAPCD Directors by the Stanford researchers. He mentioned the press conference in a passing remark, quoting Calvo to the effect that the report "reflected a new campus feeling for matters of national concern . . . (and) would be reviewed by a board committee." Cline's story terminated at this point, however, without further elaboration on other aspects of the report. (In fairness to Cline, it should be noted that his story may have been cut by page editors.)

The *Chronicle*, with its jaded taste for the flashy or "sexy" news story, buried Thurber's brief summary (13.5 inches) of the press conference on page 45–next to the TV Log–three-quarters of the way into its Friday paper. Thurber's abbreviated, non-bylined story mentioned in one of its nine paragraphs that a press conference had occurred, but otherwise confined itself to various points made in the press releases. For the time being, this was the only mention of the study in the *Chronicle*. Two weeks earlier the paper had given front-page coverage to the report of a national scientific advisory group (cited previously) which also criticized the BAAPCD for foot-dragging in its pollution control efforts; however, Thurber did not refer to the earlier report in his story on the Groth study. On the weekend following the Groth press conference, a feature article called "Fresh Air Power" appeared in a news supplement to the *Sunday Chronicle and Examiner* ("This World," September 13, page 20). The article noted "the growing public consciousness of our befouled skies," named four East Bay oil refineries receiving citations from the BAAPCD for excessive air contamination, and detailed esoteric aspects of "the lead problem"; but, again, no comment was included about the Groth report in the article, or in the wrap-up of the week's news in the Bay Area.

One month after the press conference, one of those curious journalistic episodes for which the *Chronicle* is renowned occurred. A story headed "Angry Dialogue over Smog Report (October 8) colorfully depicted a confrontation between Groth and St. Clair, the controversial BAAPCD Director. St. Clair, a former professional football player, was rated "poor" on both "attitude" and "performance" for his stint on the Board, and was characterized as an assertive individual who "does not appear to be overly familiar with the issues." When St. Clair encountered, and exchanged harsh words with, the slender Groth, *Chronicle* reporter Jack Viets played upon the David-and-Goliath nature of the showdown ("Big, burly Robert St. Clair . . . hunched up his huge shoulders and glared across the director's table at skinny Ned Groth"). Thus, the Groth report, as it acquired dramatic overtones, arose from the ashes at the *Chronicle* and was reverentially re-assessed (on page 4!) as "perhaps the most complete and incisive description and analysis of Bay air pollution yet written." To draw a moral from this sequence of events necessitates quantum leaps of logic; but it might not be too far off the mark to suggest that the *Chronicle*'s appetites for environmental news stories are still best whetted by the presence of controversy. A matter for conjecture: would the impact of the Groth report on the *Chronicle* have been heightened by the appearance at the press conference of a North Beach topless dancer, wearing a gas mask?

Other Bay Area dailies covering the Groth report either reprinted Stanford press releases (often word-for-word) or carried a UPI wire service story. (Although AP filed a story on the Groth report, based upon a press handout and a rewrite of Cline's article in the *Examiner*, none of the region's dailies carried the AP file.) Essentially, UPI also rewrote a press release, dealing with the automobile's environmental impact and miscellaneous pollution sources. In one segment of its story, UPI indicated that the Groth report had criticized "foot-dragging" by the BAAPCD and local industries in implementing pollution controls, but did not elucidate by naming specific companies. A UPI representative in San Francisco said the bureau "applied standard news judgment" in considering how it wished to cover the Groth report, but decided that its subscribers, who want "something fresh, dramatic or with a twist," would find a university study somewhat tedious.

These comments reveal the news philosophy which informs wire service coverage of environmental issues, and suggest why that coverage is often inadequate. While editors of Bay Area papers utilize wire service copy to keep on top of fast-breaking environment stories, they admit that the wires cannot be relied upon to furnish coverage with much depth. Seventeen agencies in the Bay Area are concerned with environmental problems, and the wire services staff only a handful of meetings in a small number of these organizations. As is the case in other large cities, the San Francisco bureaus of AP and UPI yield most environmental reporting tasks to the region's dailies, for they recognize that such stories are usually of only peripheral interest to their clients outside the Bay Area. Both services derive the bulk of their environmental copy by rewriting stories appearing in editions of the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* which are delivered to the bureaus continually throughout the day.

Furthermore, neither San Francisco wire bureau assigns staffers to full-time environmental reporting duties. As a result, the wire service coverage only skims the surface of a given ecological story, leaving many aspects unreported. Ralph Fairchild, editor of the Fremont *Argus,* finds little to commend about wire coverage of environmental deterioration:

> Comparing wire service reports with what our reporters saw and heard, we find almost uniformly the wire reporters bring no real understanding or comprehension of background knowledge to the situation to be covered, and show none when they have attended a meeting and heard something that could prove educational or instructive.
>
> Wire services are usually grossly inaccurate as a result, often missing the major news.

Fairchild's remarks are echoed by the editor of the Napa *Register,* Philip Neiswanger, who credits the wires with doing a "good job" on breaking environmental stories but criticizes the omission of stories "that broadly cover the problem, explaining degrees of pollution and such." "Part of the problem," Neiswanger indicates, "is translating the technical talk into readable copy." That problem, of course, hasn't been successfully confronted by the newspapers either.

In considering the data on coverage of *issues* by the news media (see Table III) one finding is particularly striking: the three thematic issues most poorly covered (i.e., most ignored) by the press dealt with performances of specific industries and elected officials, and with activities that members of the public could take to protect the environment. Only three newspapers spotlighted individual industries in their counties which were included in the Groth report case studies for high rates of air pollution. Of these three papers, two (the *Argus* and *Review*) contained the same story, written by Castle, which was the only newspaper account to provide a cataloguing of the industries with pertinent comments and quotes from the report.

Williamson's story in the Oakland *Tribune* gave a one-sentence mention to the Lloyd A. Fry Roofing Co. in San Leandro, a firm with a notorious reputation in the Bay Area for chronic violations of BAAPCD regulations, noting that Fry Roofing's 98 pollution citations in 1969 was the highest number in the area. (This paraphrased a sentence in a Stanford press release about Fry Roofing, the only industry mentioned by name in the releases.) The San Leandro *Morning News,* which printed a press handout about the report, made no mention of Fry Roofing's inclusion in the document.

A similar pattern of non-coverage occurred in regards to the Groth report's evaluation of BAAPCD officials, with only the *Examiner* (Cline), *Mercury* (Harris) and *Independent-Journal* (Peterzell) acknowledging comments made by Stanford researchers about BAAPCD Directors from their respective counties. Furthermore, only two papers (the *Mercury* and the Fremont *News-Register*) explained the political, economic and personal courses of action which the Groth report had prescribed for citizens wishing to adopt a more aggressive pro-environment stance. *None* of the newspapers indicated where interested readers might obtain a copy of the report—a valuable piece of information, in that the document was partially designed as a guidebook for action by concerned private citizens.

It is, of course, difficult to generalize from these specific findings; making cosmic pronouncements about media performance is always a task of dubious merit. However, the evidence in this instance points to a conclusion that Bay Area newspapers failed in fulfilling the social responsibility mandate of "servicing the political system by providing information, discussion and debate on public affairs." Where the press might have exerted pressure on local industries to consider pollution controls from something other than a "cost-benefit" perspective, it instead shaded the businesses in question from the glare of unfavorable publicity. Where the press might have placed on public record the environmental sentiments of influential public figures, it instead left its audience in ignorance of these men's attitudes and their performances as public representatives. Where the press might have suggested constructive alternatives to decelerate the deterioration of air and water resources, it instead indicated no plan of action for interested citizens.

Although only a handful of newspapers can claim to influence the course of national and international affairs, every city's newspaper can have an enormous impact on events in the community it serves, because it controls much of the information flow to the public. If information is really the key to power, as some would suggest, then a local newspaper can confer power on its audience to shape local events. But by remaining silent, or only publishing part of an important story, the newspaper withholds potential social levers from that audience, and may cut them out of decision-making processes which affect their lives.

Television and Radio Coverage

Broadcast coverage of the Stanford air pollution report defies exacting evaluation, since effectively monitoring the geographically sprawling television and radio outlets in the Bay Area was a near impossibility. However, some *tentative* observations on the quality of the coverage, drawn from correspondence with station managers and some frantic channel-switching, can be offered.

It was hardly unusual that the most proficient reporting job (in terms of length and the number of details conveyed to the audience) was turned in by KQED-TV, San Francisco's public broadcasting affiliate. Marilyn Baker, who staffed the press conference for KQED's highly acclaimed "Newsroom," wrote and narrated a five-minute segment on the Thursday evening program which clearly eclipsed the coverage given the report on commercial broadcasting outlets–and in both San Francisco daily newspapers. Initially, Miss Baker focused on the public opinion poll, displaying charts constructed by the station to facilitate the audience's visualizing the opinion preferences. She then indicated the report's abrasive criticism of certain industries, singling out for specific note the Lloyd A. Fry Roofing Co., which (as we noted previously) leads the region in citations for excessive emissions; discussed the method used to evaluate BAAPCD Directors, named individual Directors and commented on their respective ratings; and, finally, explained *how* viewers could obtain a copy of the report–the vital item of information which all other media, print and electronic, neglected to supply.

KCBS, an all-news radio station in San Francisco, carried reports of the press conference throughout the afternoon and evening of September 10 and 11, including taped remarks from Groth. In addition to standard news formats, "Ecology Scene," a feature series on environmental problems heard on several CBS-owned radio stations, devoted five programs to the report, which appeared thrice daily during the week of September 21. Each "Ecology Scene" segment, then narrated by former KCBS news director Jim Simon but written by Mrs. Heidi Schalman (whom Simon never appropriately credited on the air), combined a pithy summary of a single aspect of the report, spliced around short taped comments by Groth (recorded from a telephone interview, since KCBS did not staff the press conference). Because of the station's sizable audience in the Bay Area (KCBS is number one in the morning market, and among the top five stations in the afternoon), its week-long play of the story undoubtedly made Bay Area residents at least aware of the report's existence and, possibly, a few of its primary conclusions. However, time limitations imposed on radio "spot" features precluded any detailed analysis of the document's regional implications.

KPIX-TV (which did staff the conference) gave the Groth report bottom local priority, just before weather and sports, in its newscast that evening. Their one-minute story emphasized the public opinion poll results, especially the finding that Bay Area residents, though voicing a serious desire to curb air pollution, admit they are wedded to their cars and reluctant to consider alternative transportation models. This led-in to a film segment in which KPIX newsman Rollin Post asked Groth's opinion on the effects of proposed state legislation banning automobile engines running on leaded fuel–an illustration of the broadcast media's propensity to focus on whatever question their own "man-at-the-scene" poses.

A few other stations in the area also chose tape or footage of their own correspondent questioning Groth. KSFO, a San Francisco radio station, used brief clips of an interview with Groth for several news segments on September 7 (three days *before* the press conference), and carried a 30-second spot resume on the date of the conference. Most stations used footage made either before or after (rather than during) the press conference, a fact which suggests the limited utility of the press conference as a means for transmitting different types of news *content* to the media.

With minimal expenditures of creative energy, the broadcast media might have produced some excellent documentary footage on the local air pollution crisis, based upon findings of the Groth report. Juxtaposing visual content (perhaps films taken at sites of industrial pollution in the Bay Area) with factual descriptive material from the report could have been enlightening for many viewers. However, such enterprising journalism was conspicuously absent in the coverage of this document by the region's electronic media. Complacency stole the show.

Conclusions and Recommendations

When Dr. Barry Commoner delivered an address entitled "Our Polluted Environment: The Facts of Life" to the National Association of Broadcasters last April, he concluded his remarks with the following admonition:

> The enormously serious problem of surviving the environmental crisis depends on a three-part alliance:
>
> The scientists have to produce the information and make it publicly available. The media have to get the information to the public. The public has to use the information to decide what economic, social, political actions should be taken.
>
> This is the alliance that must save the world from destruction.[1]

This paper has viewed Commoner's "three-part alliance" as an environmental information continuum with three major stages. Our focus has been on the first two, the knowledge source and the mass media, for if the pertinent information is not conveyed to the public in some coherent form, there is little probability that the public can choose among alternative courses of action. In this section, we shall consider some of the barriers which impede the information flow in the first two stages and discuss ways in which these barriers may be circumvented.

Adroit management of press relations provides one method for bypassing barriers which occur in the information transfer from the source to the media. Our analysis suggests that press releases can be particularly effective vehicles for disseminating complex environmental information. Nearly all Bay Area journalists covering the Groth report relied upon the Stanford News Service releases in part, and often totally, in preparing their stories. Whether this implies a colossal journalistic indolence is a matter for conjecture. Yet it seems certain that newsmen–pressed to meet fast-approaching deadlines and wary of becoming mired in the labyrinthine structure of most scientific research descriptions–will naturally look to the press release as aids for leaping over, rather than arduously plowing through, such obstacles. "Some of the better education and science writers do read these documents from cover-to-cover," comments Harry Press of the Stanford News Service. "But most assume that the university public relations office has already picked out the choicest points in preparing the press releases, so they feel they do not have to dig for themselves."

We would recommend, as a general rule of press relations, that the information source always allow the media sufficient time to study research reports thoroughly, before the press conference or the date of release. The last-minute release of the Groth report, an inexcusable *faux-pas*, may have dissuaded reporters from exercising any individual initiative in their coverage; it certainly forced an overwhelming reliance on the releases. If the reporters had had ample opportunity to consider the report prior to the press conference, they might have acquired a firmer grasp of its admittedly sweeping contents and perhaps formulated more challenging questions for the panel. Had they been able to prepare "advancers" prior to the release date of the report, they might have pursued the major issues with greater tenacity and also given greater attention to more sublime details in the report. The effect of the delayed release on the media's coverage, though immeasurable, may have been sizable indeed.

If the press releases had included the names of specific individuals and industries mentioned in the Groth report, the amount of coverage given to local issues and personages might have increased. Coverage in these areas was, as we noted, highly inadequate. Spelling out the availability of such information admittedly undercuts responsibilities that the individual reporter should assume, and may actually increase the complacency of the press. Still, from the perspective of the environmental news source (with his goals in mind), the value of a press relations tactic is measured by the coverage it generates, rather than any reportorial initiative it subsumes.

Among other press release strategies, packets of photographic materials can be supplied to provide incentive for greater visual coverage (which was almost non-existent in the media's treatment of the Groth report). To this end, more exhibits and demonstrations with graphic aids during the press conference might prove successful. Also, releases can be tailored for the specific medium, with terse, radio-style narratives and television scripts prepared along with standard newspaper styles. The point being stressed is that intelligent, well-written press releases can significantly increase the chances of the media's reporting environmental information. Consequently, universities, science organizations and conservation groups had best disavail themselves of any contemptuous attitudes toward press relations, since such beliefs will only hamper the information transmission process.

On the other hand, the amount of new information or differing perspectives conveyed to reporters at a press conference is scarce indeed, judging by the results of this study. The press conference is successful when it entices coverage and provides a news peg upon which the media can hang a ponderous mass of dry, factual material. From the media coverage of the Groth report, one might assume that the press conference was a disaster. The conference was largely ignored by both print and broadcast media in their coverage; it might well have never occurred. This impression can be deceiving, however, since the largest newspapers and broadcast stations in the Bay Area *did* staff the conference, whereas the report might have received no coverage at all barring such an "event." Thus, the *depth* of information conveyed to the media at a press conference (or any other pseudo-event) can be miniscule, but the measure of a conference's effectiveness may lie in its success at overcoming media inertia.

Naturally, this caters to the media's tastes for "sensationalism" in environmental coverage, which is a lamentable trait but one to which the environmental information source must adapt. The initial "Earth Day," a *magnum opus* of pollution pseudo-eventery, provided a volcanic force which generated mountains of press coverage for the environment movement (see Chapter II). Such imaginative strategies are clearly called for in promoting environmental coverage at the local level. Moreover, they may be necessary as defensive measures to counter lavishly financed industrial press-and-public relations campaigns, which are often aimed at distorting the public's perspective on environmental issues. (The gargantuan "press feeds" given for the Bay Area news media by East Bay oil refineries are a case in point.)

In the second stage of the environmental information continuum, the source's ability to influence or create coverage diminishes and ultimately ceases to exist. Responsibility for dispersing the information now rests totally with the media organization. A number of factors related to the internal workings of the media come into play.

A major factor affecting the coverage and dissemination of the Groth report findings was the apparent breakdown of journalistic adversarity in the treatment of locally important issues. This is evidenced by the failure of many of the region's media to cover the Stanford air pollution report at all, and the amateurish and uninformative reporting that prevailed in most papers that did cover the story. Many of the area's newspapers attempted nothing more enterprising than reprinting press releases; most television and radio stations tightly compressed details of the report into brief news blurbs that left important issues unreported. Local news media ought to adopt as a goal the aggressive coverage of local concerns, for the media's strength in shaping public opinion and policy should be most profound in this realm. In the case of the Groth report, the Bay Area media simply missed the opportunity for adversarity. By keeping its audience ignorant of the Stanford research, the media created a weapons lag in the arsenal of information which the public could mount in seeking pollution abatement.

A final observation drawn from this analysis may seem self-evident, but it nonetheless merits emphasis. It is, simply, that an individual journalist can have enormous impact on the quality of an entire news operation. The San Jose *Mercury* got tough-minded, intelligent coverage of the Groth report—as it does on most environmental issues—because the paper generally allows Harris free rein to follow his reportorial instincts, and gives prominent display to his efforts. Similarly, Peterzell and Castle, of the San Rafael and Fremont dailies, have merged personal interests in environmental affairs with the sensibilities of top-flight journalists; in so doing, they have moved environment coverage near the top of the list among their papers' news priorities. Perhaps the decision of whether a medium will act as an adversary really depends on the proclivities, and the energies, of a few individuals.

These reporters, and certain of their counterparts in the broadcast media, performa public service by communicating to their audiences some grounds on which to evaluate the policies and programs which affect environmental quality—and perhaps to forestall their potentially deleterious effects. If "journalistic amnesia" prevails in assessing such policies, *Saturday Review* science editor John Lear has asserted, "society will simply go on repeating the same old tired mistakes, instituting new ones without making use of any yardsticks of performance."[2] Clearly, "repeating the same old tired mistakes" in educating the public about the environmental crisis can only have dire consequences.

WHY MEDIA DON'T NAME NAMES

How adequately do the mass media cover the environmental aspects of products, services, and companies? How much information do they present about products or services sold through environmental advertising?

In an effort to answer these questions, issues of *Business Week* and the San Francisco *Chronicle* were once again content analyzed. The *Business Week* sample consisted of all articles published in April and May of 1970; they were coded for environmental content. The *Chronicle* sample consisted of the newspaper's library of clippings under the following headings: Environment, Recycling, Standard Oil of California, Soap, Boise Cascade Corporation, and False Advertising. (The *Chronicle* clips and files its own articles as well as those of the San Francisco *Examiner*. Newspaper morgues are haphazard affairs, however; there is no guarantee that every relevant article was properly filed.)

In April and May of 1970, *Business Week* published a total of 28 environmental news stories. Many were multi-page features; the 28 stories summed to 32 full magazine pages of environmental copy, an average of nearly four pages per issue. Clearly, *Business Week* was not left out of the surge of media interest in the environment.

The 28 environmental articles may be subdivided as follows:

- Nine articles described the efforts of specific companies to solve their own pollution problems.
- Five articles described the activities and successes of companies in the anti-pollution business.
- Four articles described the overall environmental picture without naming names.
- Three articles described Earth Day preparations and activities.
- Seven articles described the environmentally detrimental activities of one or more named companies.

Only the seven articles in the last category, of course, can in any sense be considered as counter-balances to environmental advertising. Four of the seven reported government actions against large corporations on environmental grounds. Two reported the successful efforts of conservationists to stop or alter corporate activities. The seventh was an editorial, criticizing the Chevron Oil Company for inadequate safety precautions resulting in a major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Business Week is by no means a news magazine; it runs dozens of feature articles every month on trends or developments that the editors find interesting or important. Yet the Chevron editorial was the only article in the two-month sample period that gratuitously mentioned the environmental depredations of a specific company. The remaining six articles that dealt with corporate environmental irresponsibility all had compelling hard news pegs. And 21 environmental articles ignored corporate irresponsibility altogether.

Business Week enthusiastically tells its readers about corporate anti-pollution activities. It impartially tells them about government crackdowns and conservationist protests. But it seldom tells them about environmentally detrimental products, services, and companies. As an antidote to environmental advertising, the news in *Business Week* is clearly inadequate.

The library of the San Francisco *Chronicle* contains well over 2,000 clippings filed under the heading "Environment." The file goes back to 1968, but three-quarters of the clippings are dated 1970 or 1971. A random sample of 300 clippings (every eighth clipping starting with the most recent) was selected for analysis.

Only nine of the 300 articles contained the name of a specific company or product in the first five paragraphs. (It should be noted that articles dealing with specific companies or products are likely to be filed under the company name. Nonetheless, many articles on narrow topics were cross-filed under "Environment" as well.) Of these nine, seven contained no information unfavorable to the company or product on environmental grounds. Five reported on corporate anti-pollution activities; one quoted a corporate official on general environmental problems; one announced the abandonment of a factory because of the added expense of anti-pollution equipment. The remaining two articles both reported government actions against specific corporations.

Many of the articles in the sample failed to name a company or product despite an obvious opportunity to do so. The proposed Alaskan pipeline was discussed without naming the participating oil companies; pesticide pollution was examined without naming the offending pesticides; smog levels were listed without naming the smog producers.

Between January 1970, and March 1971, the *Chronicle* filed 65 clippings under the heading "Recycling." Nearly all the articles are detailed accounts of the recycling plans and schedules of various organizations, commercial as well as non-commercial. (Several articles dealing with corporate recycling plans appeared in the same issue as advertisements touting those plans. Though the *Chronicle* does not usually file advertisements, these ads were found clipped to the news articles.) Specific company names abound, reappearing in story after story as local recycling efforts are repeatedly described.

Certain data, however, are consistently missing. Not once in any of the 65 articles did the *Chronicle* (or the *Examiner*) name a single manufacturer whose cans or bottles are not recycled. Not once did either newspaper attempt to gauge the percentage of recyclable containers that are actually recycled. Not once did either one suggest that corporate recycling may be just a public relations device, that the containers collected at "recycling centers" may actually be dumped instead of recycled. (In a personal interview with this researcher, Peter Giddings of KGO in San Francisco claimed that he had documented this practice in at least one instance.) And not once did either paper address itself (in the context of recycling) to containers that are incapable of being recycled--plastics, coated and painted cardboards, etc.

The *Chronicle*'s file on the Standard Oil Company of California contains ten articles dealing with the company in an environmental context. (Dozens more are concerned with corporate profits, promotions, personnel, and the like.) Two of the ten articles announce the introduction of Chevron unleaded gasoline; they are entirely uncritical. A third article notes briefly that the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District has listed Standard's Richmond plant as among the area's worst air polluters. The remaining seven articles are concerned with Standard's controversial gasoline additive, F-310.

The two earliest articles on F-310 are both based on sources within the Standard organization, announcing "A New Gasoline That 'Cuts Smog' " (the *Chronicle*'s headline of December 19, 1969). The third article pointed out that several independent tests of the additive were under way. Of the remaining four articles, three dealt with the critical findings of the State Air Resources Board, a committee of the Hawaii State Senate, and the Federal Trade Commission; the fourth summarized Standard's defense and research data.

The *Chronicle*'s coverage of F-310 was unusually critical of the product and its advertising. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that five months passed between the first article on the benefits of F-310 and the first article on its drawbacks. During that time innumerable conservation groups issued statements damning the additive, its use, and its promotion. But not until a government agency issued such a statement did the *Chronicle* decide to run the story. Also worthy of note is the fact that no other article on Standard during this period (including the two on its lead-free gasoline and the one on its citation by the BAAPCD) mentioned the existence of F-310. Nor did any of the F-310 articles mention the BAAPCD citation.

"Soap" is the label on the *Chronicle* file dealing with the detergent industry. The file includes 19 items of environmental interest. Five of these are columns (by Terrence O'Flaherty and Milton Moskowitz), and are generally critical of the industry. Of the 14 news articles on the subject, seven are reports of government action concerning phosphates or enzymes. Four are devoted to industry plans to cut down on phosphates or enzymes (in response to government action). And three articles announce the introduction of new "biodegradable" detergent-substitutes.

Largely because of the interest of O'Flaherty and Moskowitz, the *Chronicle* acquitted itself well in its coverage of detergent pollution. However, none of the 14 news articles dealt with the environmental dangers of detergents without a strong governmental news peg. And none of the articles named those manufacturers who were dragging their feet in the elimination of phosphates and enzymes.

For purposes of counteracting the effects of environmental advertising, clearly the most important article was the list of detergent brands and their phosphate content, published by the *Chronicle* on May 2, 1970. The list was released by the Federal Water Quality Administration, and was very incomplete. The *Chronicle* did not publish the complete list (from the same source) until September 6. The New York *Times,* by contrast, ran a complete list from private sources in December of 1969. It was apparently the only major newspaper to do so.

The *Chronicle* file on the Boise Cascade Corporation contains roughly 200 clippings, dating from 1968. Thirty-one of the stories are concerned with the environment. Eight of these are the result of corporate public relations, alleging environmental responsibility. Of the remaining 23, 18 are reports of government actions or the threat of government action, while five are reports of conservationist protests. Only one article mentioned (in a single-paragraph quote from a conservationist leader) the hypocrisy of Boise Cascade's corporate advertising.

In covering the company's promotions and press releases, the *Chronicle* never once mentioned its fights with the government over environmental pollution. In covering its fights with the government, the *Chronicle* never once mentioned the promotions and press releases. And in no case did the *Chronicle* initiate its own story on Boise Cascade's environmental activities without an unavoidably strong hards news peg.

The *Chronicle* file entitled "False Advertising" contains only seven clippings related to environmental ads. All seven are based on lawsuits, consent decrees, hearings, and other government actions. The *Chronicle* by no means covered all such government actions; there are hundreds every year. But in one sense, at least, the newspaper has a perfect record: it has never yet exposed a misleading or socially undesirable advertisement without a government news peg.

The content analyses reported above are not, of course, a complete record of environmental news in the San Francisco *Chronicle* and *Business Week* magazine. And the *Chronicle* and *Business Week* need not be typical of other mass media.

Nonetheless, the evidence is compelling. If these analyses are in fact representative, then environmental news is of little value in countering the effects of environmental advertising. The media appear to be very reluctant to mention specific products, services, or companies in an environmentally derogatory context They do so only when an event is of such importance that traditional journalistic standards demand a story. And even then, the media rarely compare this environmental information with corporate public relations or product advertising. As a practical matter, as long as it remains safe from government regulation, environmentally irresponsible advertising is safe from media exposure as well. There are exceptions, of course. San Francisco's non-commercial television station, KQED, devoted over five minutes to detergent pollution on its award-winning "Newsroom" program of March 12, 1971. Reporter George Dusheck began by quoting from advertisements for "biodegradable" and "phosphate-free" detergents. Then he disposed of the "biodegradable" part, pointing out that all commercial detergents have been biodegradable since 1965. On the subject of phosphates, Dusheck cited data from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to indicate that nitrates rather than phosphates might be the main agent of detergent pollution.

The rest of the story was devoted to the locally manufactured Shaklee products, which are advertised as phosphate-free, nitrate-free, enzyme-free, boron-free, organic, and biodegradable. Dusheck quoted extensively from Shaklee brochures and narrated a taped interview with a company official. He then turned to a chemical analysis prepared by the Rochester Committee for Scientific Information:

> So, out of the dream world of natural and organic and not synthetic, here's what's really in Basic L [a Shaklee product], according to the Rochester Committee. Here's the chart: 73% sodium carbonate and so on. Sodium carbonate, which is the principal ingredient, is simply our old friend, washing soda. You can buy it from Arm and Hammer for about 15¢ a pound, compared to the 70¢ a pound from Shaklee's Basic L. . . . Well, that's Shaklee's secret, natural, organic formula.[3]

Dusheck closed by comparing the ingredients, prices, and profits of Shaklee's, Sears' and Safeway's phosphate-free detergents.

KQED's broadcast is as unusual as it is admirable. Far more typical is the following Associated Press story, as printed in the Palo Alto *Times*:

> Sacramento (AP)–The State Water Resources Control Board has halted dredging in the mouth of the Russian River until the environmental impact of continued dredging can be determined.
>
> Various conservation groups, notably the Jenner Coastline Conservation Coalition, had petitioned for the halt, claiming the dredging would destroy both scenic and biological features of the river mouth near Jenner.
>
> There will be no dredging until "the completion of studies which demonstrate under what conditions the discharge can be made without adversely affecting the aquatic environment," the board said Thursday.
>
> Members said current information was inadequate and ordered further hearings and studies.[4]

This story is typical of environmental news in several ways. It concerns an on-going environmental event–the dredging of the Russian River–that had proceeded for years with minimal news coverage, despite the vocal complaints of conservationists. Only when the government finally took action was the story covered. And then it was covered without once naming the company responsible for the dredging. Is it a large corporation? Is it a big environmental advertiser? The reader will never know.

There is no denying that environmental news does help in some small measure to counter the effects of environmental advertising. Every bit of information about the environment, after all, aids in putting the ads in proper perspective. But the failure of the media to name names–to discuss the environmental impact of specific products, services, companies, and advertisements–clearly limits the value of environmental news. The environmental irresponsibility found on the advertising pages escapes almost unscathed by current journalistic practices. The problem is not that easily solved.

In an effort to understand the failure of the media to cover adequately the issues raised by environmental advertising, this researcher wrote to 43 Bay Area reporters. Fourteen responded, and five were subsequently interviewed.

Virtually all of the fourteen reporters were sensitive to the misimpressions created by environmental advertising. None of them claimed that these misimpressions are entirely (or even substantially) corrected by the news. But most argued that they *could* be corrected by the news, and that standards of coverage were moving in precisely that direction. To assess the validity of this claim, it is necessary to examine the reasons for current inadequacies in coverage.

The failure of the media to report corporate irresponsibility, including advertising abuses, is occasionally interpreted as an extra "service" to advertisers. Certainly the economic health of a newspaper, magazine, or broadcast station is directly dependent on the goodwill of its advertisers. It seems reasonable to expect some pressure on news executives (and from them to reporters) to avoid offending major companies in their stories.

A few reporters contributed examples of this sort of pressure on environmental coverage. One environmental reporter on a Bay Area metro recalls that soon after the start of the Chevron F-310 advertising campaign, he attended a respiratory disease convention in San Francisco. Several of the participants, including a Riverside County health official, were highly critical of the new gasoline additive. The reporter wrote the story as a sidebar to the convention.

> The city editor at the time held the story for several days. I questioned him about [it] and he finally red-lined it (banned) with the astounding comment: "Oh, hell. This isn't all that pertinent, and the firm has a big advertising campaign with us now. Maybe later." I have done some intensive research on my own on that score and have determined that it was his own second-guessing of management's desires rather than any kind of order from above that prompted his decision.

Sometimes the pressure does come from top management. A news editor of a San Francisco radio station was on the desk when California State Assemblyman Ken Meade introduced a bill prohibiting advertising by public utilities, and the story was run promptly. Shortly thereafter, the editor received a telephone call from the station's general manager. He asked whether the editor had attempted to get "the other side of the story," and he provided the names of several local utility public relations men. The editor comments: "It is always fair to ask whether both sides of any story have been covered, but I'm pretty sure this is the first time the general manager has called when I've been on the desk."

Most reporters, however, were peculiarly ambivalent about advertiser-inspired pressure. They admitted the generality of the phenomenon, but denied its application to themselves personally. Peter Giddings of KGO-TV expressed the majority view: "In a free enterprise system, the media have got to make money, especially television. You can't sell Reynolds Aluminum an ecology show dealing with why Reynolds Aluminum doesn't recycle its cans. But nobody tells *me* to go easy."

Similar comments came from the print media. Said Paul Peterzell of the San Rafael *Independent-Journal*: "I know of no successful pressure by any advertiser on any story in the I-J. . . . My friends on other newspapers tell me, however, that my experience may be unique." Added Lee Juillerat of the Fremont *News-Register*: "Charges that the media often protects their advertisers are well-founded. . . . Actually, however, it does not constitute a serious problem at the *News-Register*."

Most environment reporters can describe "touchy" stories they have written that were finally printed or broadcast. What is most interesting about these descriptions, however, is that they do not revolve around the absence of pressure, but rather pressure successfully withstood. It is difficult to find an example of a "touchy" story that was printed or broadcast *without* such pressure. One may surmise, therefore, that many such stories are never written because of the probability that they would be published, if at all, only after intense debate. As David Perlman of the San Francisco *Chronicle* puts it: "Certainly there is no encouragement from the top to write that kind of story. The result is inertia at the bottom."

The interests of advertisers are central to the stated or unstated policy of every mass medium—but there are other interests to be protected as well. Kenneth J. Rowe of the Redwood City *Tribune*, for example, notes that his publisher is convinced that the future economic viability of the newspaper will depend on circulation in the huge new Redwood Shores subdivision. Rowe himself believes the subdivision is "environmentally indefensible," as do many area conservation groups and government agencies. "The pressure," he says, "has come from the circulation department, not to run too many stories about what's wrong with the development." He says he is able to withstand the pressure "when there's a hard news peg to hang the story on."

And George Dusheck of KQED-TV asks: "Why don't you ask me how we'd handle stories unfavorable to the Ford Foundation? My first-order answer is, I'm curious to see that myself. . . ."

Pressure from top management and the reporter's expectation of such pressure are important contributors to inadequacies in environmental news coverage. But they are by no means the only factor involved. The availability of information is a second consideration of major importance.

Of the 104 randomly-selected environmental articles in the San Francisco *Chronicle* (Chapter II), fully 65 of the articles were based on information obtained from various government agencies. Eight came from academia, seven from conservation groups, four each from industry spokesmen and private parties, and sixteen from miscellaneous or unclassifiable sources.

The major source of environmental news, then, is government. Implicit in this fact is the likelihood that only the most extreme cases of environmental irresponsibility will be publicized, and then only after the damage has been done and all attempts at negotiation have failed. This is not inevitable, of course. Some government agencies are more willing than others to name names; most seem to be steadily improving in this regard. Nonetheless, certain kinds of information seem unlikely to be forthcoming from government sources. Comparisons between environmental advertising and environmental reality are one very important example. And as Bob Yeager of the Napa *Register* points out: "I have often noticed the apparent reticence of government agencies to disclose the names of offending corporations."

Academic and conservation groups are more promising sources of indictments of specific businesses. But they are not as promising as might initially be expected. Mary Jefferds of the National Audubon Society, for example, claims that she is very careful not to name any companies in her press releases, but rather tends to discuss problems and proposals in more general terms. A group's bargaining position with the industry, she said, is adversely affected by the naming of names. Miss Jefferds cites as evidence "the Sierra Club's difficulty in discussing alternatives with Standard Oil now that they have openly announced their differences about the gasoline additive." Like governments, pressure groups often prefer to negotiate in secret.

Moreover, reporters tend to distrust and discount the pronouncements of conservationists. Most of them receive huge quantities of material from conservationists, and nearly all read what they receive. But they do not necessarily trust it. Dusheck says "It is not advertisers or political interests that pressure me, but militant environmentalists trying to sell me their pet project."

Most reporters appear to share this distrust to one extent or another. Several criticisms of F-310 were available before the Federal Trade Commission announced its opposition to the additive. But according to Rowe, "The FTC is a source. The Friends of the Earth is a rumor." Lists of detergent phosphate content by brand were in circulation as early as September, 1969. Perlman remembers receiving such a list. "I showed it around the office and we posted it on the bulletin board. But we didn't print it until the Interior Department released the figures"–eight months later.

Tom Harris of the San Jose *Mercury* recalls another instance:

> In October the San Francisco Clean Water Association came to me with samples of raspberries and copies of a lab report from a private Menlo Park firm, stating there was considerably heavy concentrations of fluorides therein. Knowing the ingrained bias of the people, I kept the basket, thanked them for their trouble and began an intensive cross-study of the sources myself. Finally, I pressured the Department of Agriculture to do a series of immediate tests to see if they could either duplicate or not similar levels.

When the Department of Agriculture released its findings, Harris was one of many reporters who covered the story. He preferred a government press release to a conservationist scoop.

Justin Roberts of the Contra Costa *Sun* writes: "The environmental problems are too serious and far-reaching to allow them to be taken over by public relations whiz-boys whose motives are clearly apparent." He is not referring to corporate flacks, but to conservation groups.

Critical information about the environmental impact of specific products, services, companies, and advertisements is likely to reach the mass media only through conservation groups. Reporters frequently distrust the groups, and therefore discount the information. But there is another source available: The media *could* generate their own information. This is the third major barrier to effective environmental news–the demand for a hard news peg.

In the survey of Bay Area editors and environment reporters (Chapter I), this hypothetical situation was posed: "A canning factory proposes to move into your area, and no one has brought up the possibility that the factory might pollute nearby waters. Would you investigate the pollution possibility?" A total of 73 percent of the reporters and 76 percent of the editors said that they would. These are impressive figures–but they are probably wishful thinking on the part of the respondents. Not one of the 14 newsmen contacted by this researcher was able to cite a single instance in which he had actually looked into the pollution potential of a new industry without a public controversy to spur his interest.

And of those who said that they would investigate the story, more than a third volunteered the additional information that they probably would not publish it as is. Fred Garretson of the Oakland *Tribune* was one of several reporters who noted that he would "turn it over to the Regional Water Quality Control Board and then do a story that the situation is being investigated." Not only do many reporters prefer a government source to a conservationist source. They prefer a government source to enterprise reporting as well.

The need for a hard news-peg and the pressure to be kind to advertisers are mutually reinforcing phenomena. Thus, several reporters commented that the facts of a story must be "nailed down" much more completely if the story is likely to embarrass an advertiser than if it is not. "When the Federal Trade Commission got after Standard Oil and F-310," said Perlman, "then I was free to get after them too. Until then, there just wasn't enough to hang the story on."

The F-310 advertising campaign and the hypothetical new factory are both events that require enterprise reporting for adequate coverage. But at least they are events. In order to counter the effects of environmental advertising, a reporter would have to "cover" a large number of non-events. And this reporters are extremely reluctant to do.

Consider, for example, the issue of recycling. The issue is raised by several varieties of advertising: ads that boast of recycling programs, ads that boast of no-deposit no-return containers, and ads (whatever they boast of) for products whose containers or unrecycled or unrecyclable. To correct the environmental misimpressions created by these advertisements, a news story should address itself to questions like these: How many containers are collected in corporate recycling programs, and how many are left uncollected? Which manufacturers do not recycle their containers, and why not? What kinds of containers are incapable of recycling, and what happens to them?

These questions all have one characteristic in common. They are not keyed to any news event. Plans for a new factory are announced on a specific day. Advertisements for a new product are introduced on a specific day. Something *happens* that a reporter with initiative can cover. But how does the reporter cover something that fails to happen, or something that has always happened?

He doesn't. Harris puts it this way:

> We are not a feature magazine, or technical trade journal. We are a daily source of current news, and even though there is more in-depth and interpretive work herein now than ever before, you must understand that the major emphasis will be on daily-type news. . . . The story is about firms that do recycle and why they do, where and when they do. . . . We are too busy reporting stories with solid news pegs. We have no time for checking into products and processes unless they hit us in the nose. . . . We are reporters, not newsmakers or initiators. If someone else brings it up, we'll get into it.

Harris's treatment of corporate press releases is in keeping with this stance. If the release seems valid and important, he says, then he writes it up. Otherwise he throws it out. In neither case does he investigate and expose it. That would require covering a non-event, newsmaking instead of news reporting.

None of the reporters queried for this dissertation can recall ever writing a news story about manufacturers who do not recycle their containers. Perlman offered a typical response: "I suspect that if someone intrinsically newsworthy—say Senator Muskie, for example—were to come to town and declare that can recycling is a must and here are the local good companies and the bad guys, we'd certainly use all the names. . . . What I'm getting at is the need for a news peg."

Occasionally a reporter can manufacture a news peg for a story he badly wants to cover. Several newsmen recalled cases where they telephoned conservationists or government officials for comment on an "issue" that had not been raised publicly. They expressed some guilt over this tactic, however, and indicated that it is rarely resorted to. The more usual procedure is to ignore the story.

Reporters might be more inclined to conduct their own investigations of environmental non-events if they possessed sufficient environmental expertise to evaluate their findings. Most claim no such expertise. They are specialists, but they are not experts.

Peter Giddings claims that, as a trained meteorologist, he is the only competent environment reporter working for a Bay Area broadcast station. He adds: "The number one reason why environment stories are so rare and those naming names are even rarer is that there are few qualified environmental reporters." Harris agrees. "Unmasking ecological baddies," he says, "calls for far more expertise than is available at any newspaper. . . . our firm doesn't believe in hiring consultants to do such hatchet jobs, and neither do I."

Specialization without expertise may be worse than no specialization at all. Perlman was one of several reporters who noted that his science beat required him to devote most of his time to conventions, meetings, hearings, and major breaking stories. "I have no time left for specific products and factories," he said. "Usually the city editor leaves them for me because I'm the specialist, which means they don't get covered at all. Or he gives them to a general assignment reporter who has even less training than I do."

Time pressures are repeatedly stressed by reporters as an explanation for inadequate environmental news coverage. Two-thirds of the reporters in the Chapter I survey agreed that "too little time to investigate the story properly" was a major problem in environmental coverage. The next most frequently cited problem (finding sources) was mentioned by only half as many.

Again and again, reporters asserted that they would happily investigate more "environmental dirt" if only they had the time. On the question of naming manufacturers that fail to recycle their containers, for example, Jay Thorwaldson of the Palo Alto *Times* commented: "It seems to me that it would take an inordinate amount of time to first find out where the manufacturers are and then call them." Peterzell added: "I probably would not prepare such a list if the release did not include one, but only because I am too damn busy to do so."

Most of the reporters were familiar with Dusheck's story on Shaklee soaps and detergents. Said Rowe: "That's fine for a non-commercial station. But I'd like to know what else Dusheck did that day." And Perlman asked, "If I spent three days on Shaklee, who would cover the American Dental Association convention?"

Newspaper space is apparently a less burdensome problem than staff time, but several reporters did note that lists of products take up too much space. And of course airtime is a vital limitation on all broadcast reporters. Presumably reporters have too little time to do enough writing to raise the question of insufficient space. But space is a contributing factor in some cases. Rowe noted that even if the facts of the Dusheck story were to reach him in the form of a press release, "we'd only run it on a slow day if we had the space for it." If he had researched the story himself, Rowe added, he would *make* the space for it–but he has not time to do that kind of research.

Many of these problems–space, time, expertise–boil down to a question of money. Many newspapers and broadcast stations feel they cannot afford the luxury of even one environmental specialist, much less three or four. And the idea of freeing an expert to spend days investigating a single company, to produce a long article that advertisers will find offensive and readers will find boring, must sound absurd to the average publisher.

Giddings is employed by KGO primarily as a weatherman. He does environmental stories on his own, almost as a hobby, and is paid by the story or by the hour. In 1969 he was up to six such stories a week. But in the face of declining revenues, the station forced him to cut back to two environmental stories a week at the most.

Another difficulty in environmental news coverage is provincialism. The large metropolitan dailies often do not bother to report events "out in the boondocks," while the smaller suburban papers seldom venture into the big city. Both depend heavily on the wire services for regional as well as national and international coverage.

But the wire services are the least likely of all the media to expose the underside of corporate environmental activities. They are the most dependent on hard news pegs. They are the most rushed and the most understaffed. And as one wire reporter puts it, "We are fantastically afraid of libel suits."

The list of reasons for inadequate environmental news coverage now totals to ten:

1. Advertiser pressure
2. Management policy
3. Unavailability of information
4. Distrust of conservationist sources
5. Dependence on hard news pegs
6. Lack of expertise
7. Time pressures
8. Space pressures
9. Money pressures
10. Parochialism.

There is an eleventh explanation that is at least as important as any of the other ten: the reporter's definition of news, specifically of environmental news.

The newsmen interviewed for this report were unanimous in their endorsement of objectivity, rather than adversarity, as the model of good journalism. They were, without exception, proud of their efforts to "bend over backwards to be fair." Most recognized that this standard inevitably implied a failure to report abuses too minor, too borderline, or too subtle to reach public scrutiny without the aid of the media. They were willing to pay that price. "If I have to go out looking for a problem," said Harris, "then it can't be too much of a problem."

Moreover, the majority of environmental reporters appear to view their role as one of educating the public on broad environmental issues. In the face of limited resources, this role is in competition with the alternative goal of exposing specific abuses. Giddings states the case most eloquently:

> My purpose is education, to teach people about technology and ecology. There's not much time left for consumer service. It is much more important to teach people what it means to live in a spaceship than it is to expose the evils of environmental advertising and corporate public relations. What's unsafe to buy and who did a no-no yesterday—these are interesting sidelights. But they are not the essence of ecology.

Other reporters echo the same sentiment. "We are not primarily concerned with consumer protection," says Perlman. "We focus on issues, not products, and let *Consumer Reports* handle the rest." At least four newsmen came up with the same phrase to explain their reluctance to name names: "It's a matter of priorities."

The reluctance may not be that altruistically motivated. "It is possible," admits Rowe, "that reporters share some kind of subliminal reverence for manufacturers. Maybe we unconsciously veer away from writing anything 'econo-sacrilegious'." But he doesn't really think so. "We're not pulling our punches," he claims. "We're just not the kind of media to do any punching to begin with. That's not our job."

If environmental news is ever to do an adequate job of countering the effects of environmental advertising, massive structural, procedural, and attitudinal changes will be required. Conscious and unconscious deference to advertisers and the business community must be eliminated. New sources of information must be found, and old sources must be reevaluated. Reporters must learn to investigate environmental non-events with no hard news peg to attract their interest. Experts must be employed, and freed from the constraints of time, space, money, and parochialism. Most of all, the media must decide that corporate environmental hypocrisy is a story worth covering.

THE LEGISLATIVE SIDE OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Legislative information—on the intent and implications of a bill, the present course and status of a bill, who supports or opposes a measure and why—is vital if any interested citizen is to take an informed position on an issue. Press coverage of the legislative process is highly important to the many people who rely solely on the media for that information.

It is difficult to become an environmental activist if the press is not providing basic information about environmental legislation. One cannot become involved without at least knowing when and where hearings are being held, and who it is that should be contacted in order to voice an opinion.

Researchers for this study followed four environmental bills through the 1971 session of the California State Legislature, noting those incidents that can be considered critical in the life of a bill—committee hearings, committee votes, floor votes, amendments, and so on. They then looked for coverage those events received in five Northern California metropolitan newspapers. The newspapers selected were the Sacramento *Bee,* the San Francisco *Chronicle,* the San Francisco *Examiner,* the Oakland *Tribune,* and the San Jose *Mercury.*

Only one bill, AB 151, in essence an effort to block the California State Toll Bridge Authority's proposed construction of a new span across San Francisco Bay (the Southern Crossing), received complete and continuing coverage. AB 151, however, was a hotly contested issue, with the officials of different cities taking opposing views. It had the additional dramatic salience inherent in a $300 to $500 million permanent structure spanning the Bay. The other bills, Power Plant Siting, Gasoline Tax/Mass Transit, and the Wild Rivers Act, received relatively sparse coverage and many of the "critical incidents" went completely unmentioned.

But any desire for complete information on environmental legislation must be offset by fully acknowledging the time and space requirements of a modern news operation. Last year there were introduced into the California State Legislature a total of 3,960 bills, and as of March 1971 the Senate and Assembly had to deal with more than 130 bills, resolutions, and constitutional amendments submitted to control abuse of land, water, and air. The responsibility for reporting and interpreting all of these bills lies mainly with the 49 full-time journalists who make up the State Capital press corps.

Technically, of course, room could be made for the reporting of all environmental legislation. The "mildly"-reported Wild Rivers Act received 123 column inches of copy from all five papers over a six-month period. If this much space were allotted to all environmental legislation by one newspaper it would amount to roughly 16,000 inches of copy, or one full page daily for four months. While this is a great deal less coverage than is given to sports or society news, in practical terms fully comprehensive coverage is just not possible.

The *Chronicle,* for example, has two reporters assigned to Sacramento, and it is their job to cover *all* the legislation considered newsworthy, in addition to background pieces, sidebars, governor's press conferences, political fights and the thousand other events that occur in a state capital. To begin reporting all environmental legislation a newspaper would have to start by doubling or tripling the size of its capital press staff, a move that in economic terms alone would find little justification.

For someone concerned about the environment the most that can be asked of the press is that it first serve an alerting function, providing notification of, and reports on, the critical events in the life of an environmental bill; and secondly that it create some consistent gatekeeping standards to determine which of the bills being introduced are of importance to the general public, and then attempt to provide reasonably extensive coverage of those selected bills.

This, of course, is easier said than done. The process of deciding which environmental bills are more worthy of news coverage than others requires an extensive amount of environmental knowledge on the part of editors. And simply providing an "alerting" service, informing readers of what bills are being introduced and where hearings are being held, will at minimum require some organizational changes of the capital press staffs.

How willing editors are to make changes–to attempt to provide readers with more news of laws that will affect the environment–depends on how seriously they consider environmental deterioration and how real they feel the demand to be for information concerning the environment.

COPING WITH PUBLIC RELATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

A sample of Bay Area environmental reporters or newsmen agreed to save two months' worth of public relations environmental material, and to indicate the disposition of each release.

The sample included:

* An environment beat reporter on a metropolitan daily newspaper.
* A science reporter on a metropolitan daily.
* An environment beat reporter on a large-middle suburban daily.
* An environment beat reporter on a small suburban daily.
* A frequent environment reporter on a large suburban daily.
* A (part-time) science reporter on a middle-small suburban daily.
* A frequent-beat reporter on an all-news radio station.
* The editors in charge of environmental material at two radio stations.
* A science-environment beat reporter at an educational television station.
* The editors in charge of environmental material at two commercial TV stations.

This sample was chosen in order to include a wide range of kinds and sizes of Bay Area daily news media, as well as an example of almost every kind of environmental coverage situation in the Bay Area.

With one exception, each reporter or newsman saved or made a note of all environmental material received during May and June 1971, and indicated the disposition of every release. In addition, many of the reporters and newsmen included comments as to why they threw away, saved, or used various public relations and information material.

Each reporter or newsman was given a box containing eight file folders, one folder for each week of the project. A kind of questionnaire was drawn on the face of every file folder. On the folder for each listed week, in the approximate order of receiving, the reporters and newsmen noted the source of any and all environmental material, a description of the material, whether the material was thrown out, saved (for reference, etc.), or used (or intended for use), and comments as to why thrown out, why saved, and how and why used. If the reporter or newsman could part with the material in question, it was placed in the folder.

Reporters and newsmen were to use their own definitions of environmental material but, in order to give them a clearer idea of what we were talking about, the following basic project definitions were mentioned:

> Public relations environmental material is to be defined as public relations or information material from any source which treats any subject as an environmental issue or concerns any subject often discussed in environmental terms.
>
> Environmental news is to be defined as news which treats any subject as an environmental issue, as having something to do with either the saving or the destruction of the environment. Environmental news is also to be defined as news concerning any subject that has been considered as an environmental issue by any other news report examined.

An Environment Beat Reporter on a Metropolitan Daily Newspaper

The actions of this environment beat reporter are a perfect example of the proper functioning of the beat system of reporting. Although the reporter must spend some of his time doing assigned work both unrelated and related to environmental coverage, a good deal of his time is his own and a substantial part of the newspaper's coverage of the environment is actually under his control. He is the newspaper's expert in the field, and he has a good deal to say about which local environmental issues are to receive emphasis.

The reporter is known both locally and nationally. He receives a large number of environmental releases addressed directly to him, and much, but not all, of the environmental mail received by the paper. This mail gives him control of information. He is the one who knows where and when meetings and other events and pseudo-events will occur. If he does not choose to use them, if he does not allow them to pass through his gate, these events and pseudo-events will occur. If he does not choose to use them, if he does not allow them to pass through his gate, these events and pseudo-events will probably not be directly covered by the newspaper, and if the paper covers them at all, it will probably have to depend on wire service accounts.

During seven weeks within the May-June time period, this reporter served as the gatekeeper for 209 pieces of environmental material. This is an average of 29.9 releases per week. Ninety-seven releases concerned local or regional-local environmental issues, 34 concerned state or regional issues, and 78 concerned national or international issues.

Government sources accounted for the single largest number of releases–67. Forty came from pressure groups, 36 from industry, 36 from industry-related institutions, and 30 came from other institutions, such as universities.

He threw out 81 pieces of mail, a surprisingly small number. More than half of these concerned national or international issues (47 releases), and he also tossed away mail concerning local (21 releases) and state (13) issues. In at least 24 cases he specifically stated that he had thrown away the material because it had no regional or local news value, angle, or interest.

The source of information also appeared to be an important consideration in his disposition of material. He threw out almost all the material he received from industry (30 releases) and a majority of the releases (22) he received from industry-related institutions. He threw out 12 releases from government sources, 14 from other institutions, and three from pressure groups. Proximity does account for many of these decisions but, in at least 26 cases, he stated that he threw away the material because it simply was not news, had no general news value or interst, or had no news handle. A good deal of what he felt was non-news came from industry. A combination of factors appears to be at work here. After considering proximity, he considers the material using his conception of newsworthiness. In the end result, if proximity doesn't cause him to throw out an industry release, his newsworthiness criterion usually does. Finally, he has thrown out 30 of 36 industry releases, so we must wonder if the source of information, itself, isn't a factor.

This reporter saved, usually for reference or background information, a great amount of material–71 itmes in all. Of the releases he chose to save, 35 concerned local issues, but he also saved 28 items on national or international subjects, and eight having to do with state issues. A combination of proximity and newsworthiness seem to be the key here. He saves or uses most of the local material he receives, and if he feels it has no local or state interest but is nevertheless newsworthy by his internal definition, although he almost never uses it, he will save the information. If by his own definition it contains any news or interesting information at all, he saves it.

Material that a reporter saves must have some influence on him. First of all, he generally reads it, or much of it. Secondly, he has made a decision that it has enough value to be worth saving. Finally, if he actually uses it as reference or background information in writing a story, it must have some influence on the story. For a pack rat like this reporter, saved material may not greatly affect coverage, but it is also possible that the reporter who saves material from industry-related institutions today may use it tomorrow.

He saved 25 releases from government sources, 21 from pressure groups, and ten from other institutions. Although he saved only three industry releases, he filed 12 items coming from industry-related institutions.

This reporter used or intended to use, either in print or in scheduling coverage, information from 57 different releases. This is an incredible number–pointing to a degree of information source influence far greater than expected. Since his beat is local, 41 of the items which were in some way used or intended for use concerned local issues. Thirteen were state and three were national news items.

Fully 30 were from government sources. Many of these releases announced upcoming meetings. In a number of cases advance stories were written, but generally these releases were used for scheduling coverage. The other government releases contained more meat, and several were rewritten and sent to press.

Pressure groups, essentially local, were the sources of 16 or the releases used. Advance stories were written for pressure group events (bike rides, symposiums, etc.) and a number of releases contained information that was rewritten and used as news stories.

Six items from other institutions were used in one way or another, and while three industry and two industry-related institution items were used, only one industry piece was actually rewritten (an item from Reynolds Metals on can collection) and no industry-related institution materials made it to print.

This reporter apparently sees his major task as reporting on the environmental activities of local, regional, and state government agencies. Also of great news value, at least in his conception, are the activities of local environmental pressure groups. Occasionally, he even seems to use a pressure group item to help publicize its activities. Universities and the like provide him with information for stories, but it is the rare industry or industry-related institution item that is judged both local and newsworthy enough to pass through his gate and into print.

This beat man is an excellent environmental reporter, a fine investigative and interpretive newsman. And yet in much of his work he is serving a mailman function, relaying information he receives from sources to the newspaper audience. Public relations environmental material directly influences his work.

A Science Reporter on a Metropolitan Daily

This reporter does not spend his time on the local environment beat. On his newspaper, general reporters, and often one specific general reporter, handle the day-to-day government agency meetings and the like. From his office far from the hub of daily activity, this reporter writes science and actively covers environmental issues. He is well known locally and nationally and more environmental material comes to him than to anyone else at the paper. During the eight-week time period, he received 210 pieces of public relations environmental mail, or an average of 26.3 releases per week. Only 22 items concerned local or regional-local issues and only 22 items dealt with state or regional issues. The newspaper received far more local and state environmental material than this, but those releases went elsewhere. What he did receive was 166 items concerning national or international issues.

He threw almost all of it away. Of 210 pieces of mail, he saved three and in one way or another used seven. Seventy items from government sources, 66 from other institutions, 22 from pressure groups, 21 from industry, and 21 from industry-related institutions were examined quickly and discarded. He saved *Shell News* for its discussion of the oil blow-out in the Gulf of Mexico (a commonly saved item). He saved the Wildlife Management Institute's *Outdoor News Bulletin* for its information on Alaskan wildlife. He filed this for a possible future column. He also filed PG&E material on the nuclear power controversy "to be hopefully retrieved for reference some day."

An item on an upcoming local medical symposium on the environment, a piece from the Conservation Foundation on the UN Conference on Human Environment, and a USDA announcement concerning beekeepers and environmental problems were passed on to the City Desk and elsewhere with notes suggesting they might be used. Three items (from the University of California at Davis, Columbia University, and the California Medical Association) were intended for use in future stories. This reporter also received a release from the Scientists' Institute for Public Information (SIPI) concerning its suit against the Atomic Energy Commission for promoting nuclear power reactors without providing public information. Around the same time he received a telephone call from SIPI people. He then wrote a story on the situation.

This reporter's actions are rarely directly influenced by public relations environmental material. He does not depend on written material from sources. Perhaps he should use releases more often than he does. In one instance, he received an item from the National Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association reporting that a Denver medical group had found certain (unnamed) underarm deodorants dangerous. This is an important story that other reporters did not throw away, and it is a story that deserves follow-up coverage. But in most throwaway cases of obvious importance, this reporter noted either that he had already covered them, or that the newspaper had run stories written by the wire services or the paper's Sacramento Bureau. On the whole, he cannot be slighted for his non-use of public relations environmental material. He appears to be doing his job quite well without depending on the mail to deliver his stories. This is true probably because his job does not include responsibility for the day-to-day coverage of relatively routine environmental events.

A Beat Reporter on a Large-Middle Suburban Daily

The eight-week time period directly preceded the publication of a giant Sunday environmental supplement. This reporter's major task throughout the period was the preparation of the supplement. It was his baby and he personally solicited contributions for material to fill the news space from every imaginable environmental information source. He also personally solicited advertising and suggested special environmental ads for the extravaganza.

Within the eight weeks, he received 197 items including 65 news contributions for the supplement. Since the supplement involves solicited material and since it was published after this project's content analysis time period, it cannot be analyzed and discussed here. It is an interesting and not unusual case. On the one hand it can be praised for providing its community with a great deal of environmental information and for providing access to a great number of different voices, and, on the other hand, it might be questioned as little more than a vehicle for advertising.

Considering only unsolicited material, this reporter received 132 items during the time period, or an average of 16.5 per week. The size of a newspaper may have something to do with the number of releases received. Although a well-known environmental reporter even on a small newspaper is likely to receive a good deal of directly-addressed mail, when all other variables are held constant, larger media are likely to be on more mailing lists than smaller media.

Sources of information have great influence in the case of this reporter. He threw very few items away—only 44 of the total 132. During this time period, he saved 43 releases and used or intended for use 45 items out of the 132 total. Much of his dispositional behavior, however, is due to the supplement. A great deal of material he might otherwise have thrown away or saved he used to fill news space between solicited items in the supplement. Preliminary analysis of his actions leads to a number of conclusions:

Proximity is a factor in this reporter's disposition of environmental material.

The source of information is not a major factor in his disposition.

This reporter's actions are directly influenced by public relations environmental material, and because of the need to fill news space in the supplement, at this period of time he was willing to use almost every piece of news-feature material he received. If the news source had written a story, at the very least he saved it and considered it for use.

The special case of the supplement seems to be an excellent example of what happens to a gatekeeper when he is faced with a gigantic news hole that must be filled by deadline. But even excluding the effect of the supplement on his actions, preliminary analysis leads to the conclusion that this reporter is very dependent on public relations environmental material.

A Beat Reporter on a Small Suburban Daily

This reporter fights for time to do environmental news. Perhaps the reason he gets any time at all is because his environmental stories are often picked up by other papers in the local chain to which his newspaper belongs. During the eight-week period he received 79 environmental items, or an average of 9.9 per week. The size of his paper is at work here. This reporter is known nationally as well as locally and much of the mail received is directly addressed to him. Without him, this small daily would probably receive very few environmental releases.

He received 36 items on national or international issues, 31 items on local or regional-local issues, and 12 items on state or regional issues. Twenty-four releases came from government sources, 19 from industry-related institutions, 16 from industry, 14 from pressure groups, and six from other institutions.

He threw out 35 pieces of mail. In 27 cases material was thrown away because it had no local significance or angle. Seven items were thrown away as "junk," and one item arrived too late to be of any use. Proximity is his first concern, and "junk" might very well be defined as "no news value."

His 39 saved items demonstrate that he is a pack rat, but he does discriminate–not by proximity or source, but by newsworthiness. If he is sent a newsworthy, attractive, or interesting piece he will save it.

He used only five pieces of public relations environmental material. All five provided local information.

He wants to be influenced by public relations but his newspaper isn't giving him the chance. He wants to go on junkets, he wants to cover every meeting, and he'd like to be able to use all kinds of information sources in putting together great numbers of environmental stories. But his paper simply won't give him the time. As it is he spends whatever time he has on the environment beat doing excellent investigative features and news stories, and is influenced by public relations environmental material primarily in that he saves it.

A Frequent Environment Reporter on a Large Suburban Daily

This reporter is really a general reporter who is usually assigned to the local environmental issues and stories that crop up. He doesn't receive all the newspaper's environmental mail, but he receives more than anyone else. During the eight weeks, he received 51 pieces of public relations environmental material. National or international, and state or regional mail was sent elsewhere in the newspaper–he received only four national and three state items. Of the 44 local releases he received, he threw out 24, saved only six, and used 14, a rather large number, showing considerable public relations influence.

Almost all his mail was from pressure group and government sources. He received none of the newspaper's mail from industry and industry-related institutions. Such mail went to the business department.

He threw material away for a variety of reasons. Proximity was a factor, and in at least seven cases he stated that he didn't have the time to deal with material received. Clearly a newspaper should give a reporter at least this much time.

This reporter gets mostly local releases rather than attractive pamphlets and magazines which usually come from national industry and industry-related institution sources. This, and the fact that very little of his time is involved with environmental issues, probably accounts for the fact that he seldom saves environmental releases.

Also involved is the fact that he uses quite a substantial number of the local releases he receives. The newspaper really doesn't give him the time to do much more than rewrite releases. A couple of examples best illustrate how this newspaper operates:

This reporter received a release from the Committee for Green Foothills on a Committee member who had spoken against local overdevelopment before the California State Assembly Ways and Means Committee. He wrote a news story on the release information but it was bumped at the last minute by a wire story about the situation. Shortly thereafter he received a release from the Green Foothills group concerning its support for a moratorium on zoning changes. With no time to handle the matter himself, he gave the release to the appropriate city beat reporter. The city beat reporter said it was not news, and either threw it out or filed it. With no real environmental beat, and no control of the news space, this reporter is left with the role of fighting to get stories written from releases into print.

His only byline story within the 12-day content analysis period reported in Chapter II was a piece on Assemblyman Richard D. Hayden's suggestion that airports be located on hilltops to avoid the fog and solve noise and air pollution. He got this story from a press release.

In this usual coverage-no coverage situation, public relations environmental material plays an important role.

A Part-Time Science Reporter on a Middle-Small Suburban Daily

This reporter received 19 pieces of environmental mail in eight weeks. Six concerned national or international issues, one concerned a state issue, and 12 concerned local matters. Eight were from industry, six from other institutions, and five from pressure groups. As an unknown science writer on a middle-small paper, this reporter simply doesn't get much direct mail, and since other beats cover such items as government-related environmental issues, very few pieces of environmental mail filter down to him. Nevertheless, he is the only reporter on the newspaper staff who counts the environment as an integral part of his (however part-time) beat, even though he and most of the others who do environmental news stories are really general reporters.

The little mail he gets he either saves or uses. He threw out only two releases. He saved eight for his files, and in one way or another used six. Two of those items used came from industry, two from pressure groups, and two from other institutions. Five were local, and one was national.

A Usual-Beat Reporter on an All-News Radio Station

Much of this reporter's time is spent preparing a regular environmental feature. Although she doesn't receive all her station's environmental mail, a good deal of this mail gets to her and she also receives material that has been directly addressed. During seven weeks within the time period, she received 88 items, or an average of 12.6 per week. Forty-six concerned national or international issues, 22 concerned state or regional issues, and 20 concerned local or regional-local matters. She received 40 items from government sources, 22 from pressure groups, 13 from industry, four from industry-related institutions, seven from other institutions, and two from the network.

This reporter is a saver. Of the 34 items she threw away, she noted the information contained in three, had already covered material contained in two, had the information contained in four, had a wire service report on one, glanced at two, and read nine. Proximity affects her disposition, and perhaps more important is her conception of city-suburban audience news interest. Her concern appears to be pollution problems rather than national parks.

She saved 42 items–almost anything containing information she didn't already have. For a sort of futures file she saved 12 releases for "possible stories," one for a "possible interview," two for upcoming hearings and press conferences, and three to follow up later. The rest went into her running files on all major pollution topics. She saves almost everybody's public relations material.

She used or intended to use 12 items. Six were national, two were state, and four local. Five came from government sources (four from the Environmental Protection Agency), two from industry (including two broadcasts on Lucky Breweries' glasphalt), two from pressure groups, two from other institutions, and one was a network taped interview. Public relations environmental material clearly has a direct influence on her work.

An Editor at a Radio Station

This station offers all-news broadcasts during the morning and evening drive time hours. The editor, a sort of assignment editor, believes he sees more environmental releases than does any other newsman at the station. Nevertheless, no single newsman sorts all the station's mail, and during approximately seven weeks within the time period, this editor saw only 14 environmental releases. The editor claims the station doesn't get very many environmental releases. This could very well be true. During the content analysis period, the station ran only two locally-originated stories that appeared to have come from public relations environmental material.

(Actually, the business reporter may see more environmental items than does the editor. Both public relations-inspired stories in the content analysis period were the work of the business reporter, and the editor had seen neither release.)

The editor received nine local, three state, and two national items. Eight were from government sources, three from pressure groups, one from industry, one from an industry-related institution, and one from another institution. He threw out 11, saved none, and used three (two local and one state).

He threw away items for not being of general interest, national (not local), and not "hard." Several of the releases received might very well have been saved by a reporter interested in putting together reference and background material for future stories. This editor has no special interest in environmental news (a true no coverage situation) and thus saved nothing.

Saving information material does not necessarily signify that a reporter knows what he's about, but saving nothing may indicate a bad news operation. One of the three stories used was piece on the Ecology Corps. Only a tiny bit of this governmental public relations material was used–the rest was simply thrown away. What will this station do if it ever decides to run another story on the Ecology Corps? Unless it gets new public relations material, or a solid wire story, it's in trouble.

A News Director at a Radio Station

This station offers on-the-hour newscasts and the news director runs the show. There is no environment reporter, and no reporter receives any substantial amount of directly-addressed enviornmental material. The news director sorts all the mail received by the station news department. During the eight weeks, he received 457 items which were in some way or another enviornmental. This total is so large because he receives all kinds of government notices, agendas, and reports, and each one seems to contain at least a paragraph or two on an environmental issue.

These 457 items are not a complete collection of all the environmental material received by Bay Area newsmen during the time period. Especially, it is missing a number of national releases that were received by other Bay Area media. The news director received 262 items concerning local or regional-local issues, 161 concerning state or regional issues, and only 34 concerning national or international matters. Two hundred and fifty-eight were from government sources, 81 were from other institutions, 49 were from industry, 37 were from industry-related institutions, and 32 from pressure groups.

The incredible thing about this news director is that he actually finds time to skim through and sort the vast amount of mail received each day. Most of it he simply throws out—387 items were thrown out during the time period. He saved 44 items including a wide range of subjects and sources. He seems to like magazines and pamphlets and saves many of those that he receives. The only things generally not saved are bulky government agendas and park and recreation material.

The news director is the first and last gatekeeper in this news operation. When he marked "use or intend to use" on a folder he meant that he intended to pass the material on to a reporter or that he intended to assign a story using the item. Eighteen of the 26 "used" items came from government sources, four from other institutions, two from pressure groups, two from industry-related institutions, and none from industry. Twenty-three of the 26 concerned local issues and the other three concerned state issues. This station offers very little news altogether and pitifully little environmental coverage. Although only a few environmental press release-inspired stories actually make it on the air, at least in the assignment of stories this station is directly influenced by local public relations environmental material.

A Science-Environment Beat Reporter at an Educational Television Station

The originator of the "Newsroom" format emphasizing long interpretive reports, this station offers five such one-hour newscasts each week. The science reporter is the primary man on the environmental beat, although other reporters also do environmental stories, and he receives more environmental mail than any other newsman at the station. During five weeks within the time period, he received 43 pieces of environmental material, or an average of 8.6 per week. Twenty-two concerned local or regional-local issues, ten concerned state or regional issues, and 11 concerned national or international issues. Sixteen came from government sources, 12 from pressure groups, 11 from other institutions (mostly universities), three from industry, and one from an industry-related institution.

This reporter expressed dislike for press releases and said he seldom used them. In the five weeks, he threw out all but six items received. He saved a book to read later and three releases for future stories.

Two of the releases came from pressure groups and one from a government source; all four saved items were locally oriented. He used a UC release on the resistance of bugs to pesticides, and a National Research Council release on DDT in the world's oceans. Public relations environmental material does have some influence on his work. Perhaps not enough. His throwaways included a number of interesting items. He threw out an announcement from the Office of the President, University of San Francisco, concerning an upcoming conference on conservation and jobs. He also threw out a later release reporting on the conference. Other reporters and broadcast stations gave this conference coverage. Perhaps it is the station's unique format emphasizing long interpretative stories that causes it to miss more than its share of newsworthy environmental stories. When a reporter takes the time to give regular attendance and coverage to a hearing on drugs (as this science reporter did during the time period), and when the news format of a station allows a great deal of discussion between reporters and permits late-scheduled stories to be bumped because of lack of time, it is not surprising that some important environmental stories are neglected.

An Editor at a Commercial TV Station

This station offers among its newscasts half-hour weekday evening local programs, and half-hour weekday evening network broadcasts. It has no beat or usual environmental reporter. The assignment editor receives more environmental material than any other newsman at the station. During the eight-week time period, he received 45 environmental items, an average of 5.6 per week. Twenty-three concerned local or regional-local matters, 17 concerned state or regional matters, and five concerned national or international issues. Twenty-five were from government sources, 12 from pressure groups, four from industry, one from an industry-related institution, two from other institutions, and one film and script from an unidentified source.

The editor threw out 27 items for a variety of reasons. He judged seven stories, including a trout-stocking schedule and a poster contest, as not suitable for the station's needs (meaning both newsworthiness and the requirements of his medium), one complicated story as not of immediate viewer interest, and two stories as not having local value. He thus considered newsworthiness, the requirements of his medium, viewer interest (or at least his interpretation of viewer interest), and proximity in his gatekeeping task. He also threw out four government agendas, and three releases he had no time to do stories on. Although he regularly uses pressure group information, he appeared suspicious of such groups. One pressure group release was thrown out because he felt the organization was too commercial (too interested in making money), and another was thrown out because of "misinformation." This misinformation was little more than exaggeration.

He saved only three items. This is not surprising since he is not really an environment reporter. He saved a pamphlet from Common Cause, a pamphlet from the Interior Department, and a newsletter from the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District.

This editor takes public relations environmental material very seriously. He at least intended to use or assign a full third of the material he received. Eight of these 15 items were local, five state, and two national. Seven came from government, six from pressure groups, and two from industry (including Reynolds Metals recycling). Public relations environmental material clearly plays a major role here.

An Editor at a Commercial TV Station

The station offers among its newscasts one-hour weekday evening and half-hour weekend evening local programs, and half-hour network broadcasts every evening. On repeated attempts, the station's assignment editor found that he was not really in charge of environmental material in that the organizational structure of the station newsroom did not allow any single man to serve as a gatekeeper for public relations environmental material. Various newsmen went through the mail, and the assignment editor found that he was not in any position to sort out environmental material. Apparently no one else at the station was in any better position and, clearly, the station has no one on anything approaching an environmental beat. Originally, the assignment editor had believed that he received the most environmental mail and performed a gatekeeping function, but this sampling proved otherwise.

Some Preliminary Conclusions

1) Bay Area media receive public relations environmental material from various sources. In most cases substantial amounts of public relations environmental mail are received, and in some cases environmental reporters are faced with a flood of public relations releases. Bay Area media generally receive substantial amounts of public relations environmental material from five different kinds of sources: government, pressure groups, industry, other institutions such as universities, and industry-related institutions. Government sources provide far and away the greatest number of environmental releases. Pressure groups, industry, and other institutions seem to provide similar numbers of releases, although various media and various kinds of reporters often receive differing amounts from the three kinds of sources. Although industry-related institutions provide the fewest releases, when they are considered combined with industry items the total often comes close to matching the number supplied by government.

Bay Area media generally receive substantial amounts of public relations environmental material concerning local or regional-local, state or regional, and national or international issues. Although various media and various kinds of reporters often receive differing amounts, local or regional-local releases are received most often followed by national or international and state or regional items.

2) Public relations environmental material significantly influences environmental coverage in the Bay Area media. In most cases Bay Area reporters or newsmen save and/or use in one way or another surprisingly large numbers of public relations environmental items.

Of the 11 environmental reporters or newsmen who provided dispositional information, six threw out more than half of the items they received while the other five threw out less than half.

Six of the 11 regularly saved substantial numbers of items, and seven regularly used in one way or another substantial numbers of items.

Of the three reporters or newsmen who did not regularly save or use substantial numbers of public relations environmental releases, all either saved or used such material occasionally.

3) Public relations environmental material that most often influences Bay Area coverage is that material which concerns local or regional-local issues. Of the 11 environmental reporters or newsmen who provided dispositional information, eight used environmental items concerning local or regional-local issues most often.

4) To some degree reporters on a regular environment beat tend to receive more public relations environmental material than Bay Area environmental newsmen not on a regular beat. Well-known environmental beat reporters receive directly-addressed environmental material that would not be received by environmental newsmen not on a regular beat.

THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN: PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COVERAGE

The California Water Plan (CWP) is a vast tangle of problems and solutions representing California's attempts to distribute some of Northern California's water to the water-lacking Los Angeles and Kern County areas. It has been a legal and political headache to the state government for at least 20 years. And it has become one of the most confusing, controversial and complicated environmental issues in California news.

Clearly a system of canals and pumping stations designed to reroute enormous volumes of water from Northern California to Southern California must have major impact on the natural watersheds it disrupts. Volume One of this study documents the environmental implications of the Plan in depth; they are complex, and vary along the water route from source to destination.

Both the proponents of the CWP, who are in most cases agencies of the state of California, who are usually groups of environmental activists, have been active in their attempts to attract the attention of the media. It is appropriate here to look at the scope of their public relations efforts, at how they are packaging and selling their viewpoints, and at how they are counteracting each other's offerings.

Public Relations–Pro

The Department of Water Resources is the California State agency responsible for developing and executing all phases of the State Water Project and is also the sole agency responsible for educating the public on the State's water needs and projects, through the Office of Public Information.

The total operating budget for the DWR in the fiscal year 1970-71 was an estimated $11,886,291, which comes out of the State's General Fund. Eighty-five thousand of that was spent for public information services and $407,000 for graphic services–publishing reports, photography, films, and other visual aids for exhibits at schools, etc.

The pamphlets and brochures written in the Office of Public Information are designed to explain what the State Water Project is and what good it is doing, largely by summarizing in understandable general terms the studies of the department's engineers and technical people. The emphasis of all the department's information is on the environmental benefits and the enhanced recreational facilities that will result from the proposed dam and reservoir sites.

To carry out these objectives, the Office of Public Information has four full-time paid staff people, plus a secretarial pool. (The total number of employees in the DWR is somewhere near 3200.) About 25 percent of their time is spent dealing with the media–scheduling air time appearances for DWR Director William Gianelli and other DWR executives, and sending news releases and information to the Capitol Press Service (40 copies) and to about 100 California dailies. Forty percent of their time is spent supplying information and visual displays to schools and state colleges, working with the State Department of Education editing textbooks that discuss water conservation, and preparing information and displays for Conservation Week.

The Department has also prepared a handbook on California's Natural Resources for use in classrooms and research projects. The rest of the staff's time is divided among other duties, which includes doing research and answering mail for any state legislator who requests it, and for the Governor and the Secretary of Resources. The Office of Public Information prepares all Gianelli's speeches and schedules and runs about six press conferences a year.

The Office of Public Information also runs a speaker's bureau, which is made up of about 20 people on the department staff who volunteer time to speak to church and civic groups.

Graphic services have produced eight films for the DWR directly relating to the State Water Project (two were actually produced by the Metropolitan Water District of Los Angeles, but are distributed through the DWR as well). The films run a total of 217 minutes, which at a conservative estimate of $1000 a foot, makes a total of $217,000, at the minimum, spent on films. The department distributes them free of charge to churches, civic groups, schools, etc., upon written request. Short feature films prepared as staff reports are also produced monthly and made available to the public.

All the information distributed by the DWR is in-house written: technical reports and publicity. Rarely, if ever, does the DWR employ or call upon the advice of experts or professionals outside those on their own staff. And all the information stresses the good the State Water Project will do: in effect, it is made to sound as if, without the State Water Project, the environment will deteriorate but with the Project, it will be 100 percent enhanced. The ecological and humanistic arguments of the opponents are neither touched upon nor answered in the publicity released by the DWR.

Public Relations–Con

A state agency, being a part of the state government, has the advantage of being recognized as an official voice for the general voting public, and therefore whatever it does automatically has some news value, although the media may or may not pick it up. The agency does not have to shout for attention. It is usually a state agency that is thought of first when someone needs information or help researching a specific problem.

Groups like the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Save the Eel Association, and other private conservation organizations which oppose the State Water Project have a much harder time gaining attention and respect, because they lack the State's seal of approval. They are dependent upon contributions, volunteer time, and help from experts and professionals to keep going and to give their name some authority. They may have a few paid general staff members, but rarely is there a fixed budget for publications, etc. The Sierra Club is financially the best off in this respect.

Conservationist groups are in a position of having to react to something the DWR does or proposes, as they do not have their own staff to make initial studies and proposals. Their strategy is now becoming more aggressive–taking the offensive–but in general their position has been one of dissecting a state study or proposal and pointing out its flaws and dangers. And unless they can make something fairly dramatic out of it, the media are not going to pay much attention.

A case in point is the Sierra Club's fight against the proposed peripheral canal to run down the west side of the Sacramento River Delta. Originally, after studying the proposal closely for over a year, the Sierra

Club took the stand in favor of constructing the canal, *provided* there were guarantees for adequate releases of fresh water to keep the salt content of the Delta's water from rising. Recently the Sierra Club has changed their stand to read that they are against the peripheral canal, *unless* guarantees of adequate fresh water releases are made.

Their position is almost exactly the same; the emphasis is simply reversed. The proponents of the Water Project had been quoting the first part of the Sierra Club statement and conveniently omitting the restraining clause. The Club's position was receiving no coverage—there was no controversy. In order to attract attention to their arguments, some noticeable controversy had to be created. It is a simple maneuver of manipulating the media, but unless there is something spectacular about what they are saying, the opposition won't get any coverage, and if there is, they will.

Essentially, then, their game is to make noise for no money, and then to follow this up with news releases and press conferences that keep the press aware of their activities. A news release is the best way to get uniform inside page coverage from the newspapers; to attract television reporters, a press conference can get a minute of time on the evening news, free. This exposure in turn adds to the exposure the DWR and the proponents get, but it gets the opponents' arguments before the public, with the chance of showing up the gaps in the proponents' reasoning; and it is the only way these small, private groups can contend with the $87,000 a year the DWR has to spend on publicity.

The aim behind this strategy is two-fold: to educate the public on the environmental dangers posed by the State Water Project, and to influence the decisionmakers in Sacramento and Washington. Frequently, conservation groups work in coalition; one organization leads the fight, such as the Save the Eel Association in the fight against the Dos Rios dam, but many others work with them behind the front lines. The Sierra Club, the Planning and Conservation League, and other conservation groups now have lobbyists in Sacramento and Washington pushing for conservation legislation, who give a part of their time to fighting the State Water Project. This has meant giving up their tax exempt status, but with the Metropolitan Water District of Los Angeles and the large land developers like Standard Oil who strongly support the Water Project having powerful lobbies, it was necessary to put competing pressure on legislators.

Most of these groups also have active volunteer members who write letters to legislators and other key government figures pressuring them to vote against expanding the Water Project at this time. (Fighting the Water Project is probably ten percent of the Sierra Club's total conservation effort in this state, with a much higher percentage for groups like Committee of Two Million to Save the Eel which were set up specifically to fight the Water Project.)

The Sierra Club also has a volunteer speakers' bureau. Members appear at conferences, lectures, and on radio and television to present their side of the argument.

The Sierra Club, and all conservation groups, are dependent upon experts and professionals to volunteer time to study the various proposed plans for the Water Project and formulate the group's stand on the issue. Generally speaking, they will begin with a specific report put out by the DWR, in the case of the Water Project, and, tracing through the facts and technical data presented in those reports, come to their own conclusions as to the advisability of the proposed plans. The differences in policy between groups like the Sierra Club and the State arise from their differing initial assumptions and standards, not from different data.

The Northern California Regional Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club began studying the peripheral canal about four years ago, and they studied it for a year and a half before making any official statement. They held briefings with the DWR, the Army Corps of Engineers, the State Department of Fish and Game, and other state and federal agencies, and consulted with many engineers and ecologists before publishing their report on the peripheral canal in November 1970.

The strategy these groups use, then, is to confront the State on every point and try to show the fallacies in their planning. To do this, they must present their arguments in a way that will give them an element of drama and controversy. This draws the attention of the media and gets them news and editorial coverage absolutely free—no four-color pamphlets, no professional PR staff needed.

COVERING THE CWP

The San Francisco Bay Area newsmen who responded to the questionnaire discussed in Chapter One were asked if they felt that their organization had adequately covered the Plan, and 49 percent said no—reporters and editors, broadcasters and newspapermen alike.

The resources necessary to make a comprehensive evaluation of an issue with a twenty-year history and statewide impact are prohibitive. Furthermore, judgments on what should have, or even could have, been reported at any one juncture in any one region would be risky, if at all possible. The complexity of the CWP often boggles those directly involved with it, let alone the media.

Nevertheless, some small investigation into media coverage of CWP may contribute to a feeling for what might be termed the "currency" of the issue in the media of the affected regions. It was believed that a mail-questionnaire survey of certain editors and broadcasters in these regions could suggest what has been their concern for and treatment of the controversy.

Respondents were asked to describe coverage since 1969 only, to keep the survey manageable. Six localities were chosen: the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, the two largest metropolitan areas of the state; Sacramento, seat of the legislature and the Department of Water Resources; Fresno and Bakersfield, the two largest cities in the San Joaquin Valley, which is in the central section of the state; San Diego, the second largest city in Southern California; and Eureka, the largest city in the northernmost counties.

Surveyed in each of these were the major daily newspaper (four dailies were included in the Bay Area), the commercial VHF and UHF network-affiliated television stations, and the major network-affiliated and Mutual, RKO, Westinghouse, Golden West, and Metromedia AM radio stations. (No responses were received from any medium in Eureka, and it was necessarily dropped from consideration.)

The editors and broadcasters were asked if editorials on the CWP had been presented in the period January 1969 through June 1971, and, if so, which positions were supported. As an indication of general citizen interest, newspapers were then asked about letters to the editor expressing opinions on the issue—approximately how many had been received, what percentage of all letters this represented, and whether either side had been clearly favored. Broadcasters were asked about group or individual responses to their editorials.

Both newspapers and broadcasting stations were additionally asked to describe any "in-depth" coverage of the CWP done during the same period—investigative reporting in the print media, documentaries on television, and public affairs type reporting on radio and television. Such initiative on a difficult, complicated news subject might indicate reasonable concern for the issue. (Sample questionnaires are included in Appendix IV.)

At no time was this survey envisioned as a comprehensive study of media coverage of the California Water Plan. It was hoped, rather, that some support could be mustered for several hypotheses.

First, it was expected that editorials were indeed run–perhaps evenly North and South, given the importance of the water issue to both sectors–and that most media favored the plan. Second, that audience response in the form of letters or rebuttals ran pretty high, again given the impact of the project, and that the influence of governmental public relations efforts should be apparent–the ayes should have it. And finally, that most of the media, but particularly the broadcasters, have shied away from in-depth coverage of so complex an issue.

The sample is admittedly small, and the results hardly conclusive–but they are worth considering.

Newspaper Editorials

Seven of the nine newspapers surveyed replied to the editorial questionnaire; one Southern and one Central paper did not. All seven had run editorials on the CWP, with five supporting it and two Northern metropolitan newspapers opposing it.

The average number of editorials run in the two-and-one-half year period was three. However, the San Francisco *Chronicle,* which opposed the Plan, ran 27 editorials. No opponents were encountered in Central and Southern California, though they may well exist, and proponents were hardly vociferous by *Chronicle* standards. All editorials were staff-written except those in the Fresno *Bee*; all editorials for the McClatchy chain are written by the editorial staff of the Sacramento *Bee.*

Letters to the Editor

No newspaper gave specific answers. The consensus was that each paper had received a few letters on the CWP, less than one percent of all reader mail, and most had been in reply to a specific editorial. Any letter with anything to say was published, randomly, generally within ten to 14 days after the editorial had appeared.

Investigative Reporters–Newspapers

Five newspapers replied to the query on in-depth coverage of the CWP. Three indicated they had done some investigative reporting; two indicated that they had not.

Two of the three which did are Northern metropolitan papers. The San Francisco *Chronicle* ran a three-part, 24,000-word series in December 1969 on the environmental consequences of the Peripheral Canal (see Volume I). The San Jose *Mercury* did a five-part series in September 1970 which the environmental affairs writer describes as follows:

> Yes, our paper published a rather extensive five-part series September 14-18, 1970. The five parts comprised 5,000 words and many more columns each day devoted to pictures.
>
> The series was both researched and written by myself, as the paper's Environmental Affairs Writer. Interviews locally, in Contra Costa County, and in Sacramento and hours of reading reports and planning volumes went into the research–a total of 62 hours before the writing began.

> The series had no editorial bias. It was designed to inform our readers on the actual physical parts that make up the complex undertaking; to expose the side propounded by the supporters; to give equal space to the fears and complaints of the opponents; to assess the danger of the unanswered questions about potential long-range ecological impact, and, finally, to focus its impact upon this county's own water problems and needs.
>
> A more exhaustive team effort is now being planned for another series to assess the economic, land-use, environmental and political effects completion of the project, as initially planned, could have upon the entire state.

The Los Angeles *Times* ran two single articles–one of 1500 words on October 25, 1970 and a second of 750 words on January 8, 1971–and a 2500-word article in their July 19, 1970 Sunday magazine section. The latter was an interview with Richard Wilson, president of the California Planning and Conservation League; the two shorter articles reported California's reduced water needs.

Although there is at least one regional paper in the North which is known to have done some reporting of this type, none showed up in the survey. (One Central California regional newspaper admitted not having done any, as did one Northern metropolitan paper.)

Obviously the number of respondents was too small to permit generalization, but the examples of what has or has not been done are instructive.

Television Editorials

Thirteen of the 23 television stations surveyed returned the editorial questionnaire. (All but one of the seven Northern stations replied, only seven of the 16 Central and Southern.) Of these 13, four have editorialized on the CWP, six have not although policy permits it, and three do not editorialize by station policy. KGO and KPIX in San Francisco, and KTVU in Oakland ran 13 editorials among them, all opposing the CWP. KNBC in Los Angeles ran two editorials, one supporting the CWP and one calling for "a public decision on the overall question of population levels and density" (April 30, 1971).

These 15 distinct editorials averaged between one and two minutes in length and each was broadcast at least three and no more than six times. Thus the survey produced evidence of 59 aired statements opposing, or at least questioning, the CWP, and only three supporting it. (Obviously this is not to say that there weren't others, or that the proportion itself is too significant.)

For only one of the 15 distinct editorials was a reply broadcast: Rep. Jerome Waldie responded to the KNBC supporting editorial. The station sought the reply from Waldie "because of his clear position on the CWP." Other stations claim that time was offered in strict accordance with FCC regulations, but it remains unclear whether spokesmen were sought out, as their affirmative obligation is interpreted by the FCC.

Documentary Coverage–TV

Nine stations responded to the questionnaire on documentary and special-feature coverage of the CWP. One TV station does not have the facilities for such work, and four apparently have the facilities but did no such coverage. Three of these four were regional stations; three (not necessarily the same three) were Central or Southern.

Of the remaining stations, three of which are in San Francisco and one in Los Angeles, KPIX did a three-part news-feature series in May 1971, KGO is preparing a half hour news special for viewing fall, 1971, KRON did a half-hour documentary ("Where Will the Water Go?") in February 1971, and KNBC has done at least 17 special-feature reports in the course of its regular news programming.

Though apparently little different from what some stations reported as "documentary" coverage, one San Diego station reported interviewing "a member of the California Water Resources Board when they held an annual meeting in San Diego."

Radio Editorials

Eighteen of the 35 radio stations surveyed returned the editorial questionnaire. Only three had editorialized on the CWP–two Northern metropolitan and one Southern metropolitan. (Those stations of the 18 which had not editorialized fell about evenly among the different categories.)

In San Francisco, KFRC ran a one-minute editorial four times on July 7 and 8, 1970, warning of various dangers in the CWP plans, and KCBS has run several editorials of a minute or two, most opposing the Peripheral Canal. KPOL in Los Angeles has done a number of "commentaries" on the CWP, which it claims have aired both sides of the issue at once without endorsing one or the other.

All three of these stations have broadcast replies. William Gianelli, director of the Department of Water Resources, responded to the KFRC editorial at the station's invitation. William Siri, president of Save the Bay Association, replied to one KCBS editorial which supported pro-CWP Proposition 7 on the June 1970 primary ballot. (KCBS's anti-CWP statements have received no reply, although time was routinely available.) The Sierra Club has responded to KPOL commentaries, though the station claims it takes no position.

Public Service Shows–Radio

Ten of the 35 radio stations responded to the public service questionnaire. Three, all metropolitan, indicated some programming of this type on the CWP. KFRC had a panel discussion on its "Focus '70" program July 12, 1970, re-broadcast November 9. The panel included Gianelli and former Governor Edmund G. Brown, supporters of the CWP; Alvin Duskin, Jim Lorenz, Congressmen Waldie and Paul N. McCloskey, and State Senator John Nejedly, all opponents of the CWP; David Peterson of the U.S. Geological Survey, and Eugene Higgins of the Army Corps of Engineers.

KPOL interviewed Gianelli on a half-hour documentary program, "Sunday Review," on June 20, 1971. (KPOL also sponsored an "American Youth at the Crossroads" conference in May 1971, at which Cong. McCloskey discussed the CWP with [illegible] juniors from 100 Southern California high schools.)

KFI in Los Angeles aired views on the CWP on "Newsfront Los Angeles," a public affairs program, on June 13, 1971. Gianelli and Ed Royce, San Francisco Area Regional Vice President of the Sierra Club, each made an opening statement expressing his side of the issue and then answered questions from three reporters.

Conclusions

The most serious handicap in assessing the results of this survey is the poor response rate, plus the fact that in some cases the respondents returned only one of the two or three requested replies. It is therefore impossible to establish, for instance, a correlation between editorial stance and in-depth coverage.

The survey did produce several examples of media which had opposed the CWP and had also done some independent reporting of it; and it revealed that editorializing had been done, perhaps more consistently in print and least consistently on radio, with TV falling somewhere between. Certainly the hypothesis that editorial stance would reflect PR efforts wasn't borne out—in fact, what little evidence there is refutes it.

It can be asserted that metropolitan media both North and South accounted for most of the CWP-related coverage which the survey discovered. It is not clear what the regional media are doing: more regional radio and TV stations responded that they had done nothing than did metropolitan broadcasting stations. One Bakersfield station wrote, "No, we have not had anything at all. If you have any source of supply in the way of tapes concerning this vital issue send them to us." That none of the Eureka media responded at all is in itself some indication of interest.

Given the complexity of the CWP issue, such trends are at least not surprising. Metropolitan stations have better resources to handle the subject. Some of the metropolitan in-depth coverage which the survey turned up is laudable, though radio stations lagged badly, but it still didn't reveal an abundance of attention, considering the importance of the issue. This is consistent with the initial hypothesis, although it certainly doesn't substantiate it.

The survey discovered more CWP coverage in the North. It is impossible to reach any conclusions based on such scanty returns, but the issue itself varies from North to South, and coverage could be expected to vary in kind if not in quantity. For example, one Los Angeles broadcaster wrote:

> This station has run no editorials either pro or con on the California Water Plan. You should be told that the subject is of greater interest in Northern California than Southern—I'm afraid that down here the people simply take their water for granted!
>
> I realize this is a hot political issue in Northern California but since the situation hasn't been dramatized to Southern Californians there is little we can do to drum up interest by way of editorials. Naturally we have given as much news coverage to this situation as possible.

Another Los Angeles broadcaster concurred:

> While the California Water Plan is a source of discussion down here in Southern California, it more or less takes a back seat to pressing social problems in the Barrio and the Ghetto. And, while it is for us in the broadcasting media to go out and seek the news, in this instance no one has contacted us with any information that we might be able to use.

Finally, public interest is low, if letters to the editor and rebuttals are any indication. Or public concern with media treatment is low. This unexpected result could be due to confusion, ignorance, or indifference—probably some combination of the three. No clear audience mandate was revealed in the survey.

FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted in Marvin Barrett, ed. *Survey of Broadcast Journalism, 1969-1970*. (Sponsored by the Alfred I. DuPont Foundation and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism), New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Inc., 1970, p. 81.
2. John Lear, "The Trouble with Science Writing," *Columbia Journalism Review*, 1970, *9* (2), p. 34.
3. "Partial Transcript of NEWSROOM Program," March 12, 1971, p. 5.
4. "River Dredging Halted to Wait Survey Results," Palo Alto *Times*, September 4, 1970, p. 18.

Chapter Five

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVERTISING AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We have considered some of the difficulties faced by the news media in their environmental coverage, and by the conservationists in their attempt to get coverage. The mass media often experience difficulty reporting the processes responsible for the deterioration of the environment for other reasons. One of the most compelling is financial–not simply the added cost to a newspaper or broadcasting station of hiring an environmental specialist.

In this chapter we will look again at environmental advertising, since, for almost all media, advertising is the main source of revenue. For commercial broadcasting, it is the only source. Our interest will be not so much the great quantity of environmental ads being published and broadcast (and the obvious financial gains to be made from the publishing and broadcasting) but rather in the undesirable social effects of many of these ads and in the irresponsibility of the media in accepting them.

Our study will show that the current news performance of the mass media is inadequate to counteract these undesirable social effects, and that the mass media reject or after very few advertisements, environmental or otherwise, on grounds of social desirability. This section concludes with some recommendations aimed at publishers and broadcasters about the criteria for determining advertising acceptance.

Eco-Pornography

In Chapter II we observed that the vast majority of the environmental advertisers discovered in the *Chronicle* sample, and a large minority of those found in the *Business Week* sample, are major national advertisers whose ads are to be found in nearly every newspaper and consumer magazine. In many cases they loom even larger in the advertising diets of radio and television. This is especially true of the quasi-environmental advertisers. Automotive, airline, appliance, detergent, and tobacco advertising are critical to the survival of most mass circulation magazines and large newspapers. With the exception of tobacco, they are even more critical to broadcasters.

One broad indication of the prevalence of environmental advertising is the number of magazine articles and book chapters that have been devoted to the topic in recent years.[1] Another is the collections of ads accumulated by conservation groups. The Ecology Center in Berkeley (California) collected over 400 environmental ads in an eight-month period. The Friends of the Earth in San Francisco maintain a file that is currently eleven inches thick, collected over the past eighteen months. Neither organization has established explicit criteria for environmental advertising, but both claim that they have clipped only a small fraction of the relevant ads.

It is impossible to estimate at this time the current national proportion of environmental and quasi-environmental advertisements to overall advertising volume. But the proportion is high enough to justify the attention of scholars and media decision-makers.

The prevalence of environmental advertising is important only if a significant percentage of the ads are in some way objectionable or undesirable.

Many environmental ads, of course, are entirely unobjectionable. A bookstore that advertises its stock of ecology books is guilty of nothing. Neither is a manufacturer that advertises its pollution-control devices, or a supermarket that advertises the availability of low-phosphate detergents. In late 1970, a consortium of steel and aluminum can manufacturers began an advertising campaign urging consumers to return their cans for recycling; some of the ads included a complete list of local recycling centers. Quite probably the campaign was designed to fight a possible move to returnable bottles. Nonetheless, the ads are factually accurate and environmentally responsible.

Factual accuracy and environmental responsibility are the two most important criteria for judging environmental advertising. They overlap considerably in the middle, in the area of "misleading" advertising. But the distinction is nevertheless important. Factual accuracy is the principal concern of the Federal Trade Commission, other government regulatory agencies, and much of the mass media. Environmental responsibility is the principal concern of this discussion.

Factual inaccuracies are difficult to pin down without considerable investigation and expertise. (This is also a problem for the media. Possible investigative structures for media judgment of advertising will be discussed later in this chapter.) An exhaustive advertisement-by-advertisement survey of the ads in the *Chronicle* and *Business Week* samples might well reveal many such inaccuracies. The discussion that follows, however, relies heavily on the investigations and judgments of others.

Early in 1970, Potlatch Forests Inc. began a new national advertising campaign, featuring a photograph of breath-taking natural beauty. The accompanying headline reads: "It cost us a bundle but the Clearwater River still runs clear." According to *Newsweek* magazine, the photo was snapped some 50 miles upstream from the Potlatch pulp and paper plant in Lewiston, Idaho. *Newsweek* sent its own photographer out to get a picture of the river just downstream of the plant. It looked like a cesspool.

Every day, Potlatch dumps up to forty tons of organic wastes back into the Clearwater River and the nearby Snake River. True, it has announced plans to spend $9.6 million on pollution-abatement equipment for the Lewiston plant. But so far the plans are only plans–and they were formulated only after the federal government charged the company with illegally polluting the river. Meanwhile, Potlatch also contributes 2.5 million tons of sulphur gases and 1.8 million pounds of particulates to the local atmosphere every year. It has, says *Newsweek,* the "dubious distinction of being the only industrial mill in the U.S. to have been the subject of separate air- and water-pollution abatement hearings before Federal authorities.[2]

For failing to mention the facts in the above paragraph, the Potlatch ad may be judged misleading. For asserting that the Clearwater River runs clear, it may be judged inaccurate. For backing up the assertion with an inappropriate photograph, it may be judged fraudulent.

Pacific Gas and Electricity is Northern California's largest public utility. It is also a government-regulated monopoly. Its rates are set by the state, which allows it a set percentage profit over and above its costs. Since it increases costs, every PG&E ad therefore makes money for the company. If an ad also encourages greater use of power and less attention to the environmental effects of power plants, it makes all the more money.

On April 21, 1970, PG&E ran a full-page ad in the *Chronicle.* "PG&E and the environment," the headline reads, "A balance of ecology and energy." (Ecology is the science of the inter-relatedness of everything, including energy; one can hardly "balance" one against the other.) The ad goes on to assert that a nuclear power plant that heats water by 18 degrees causes "no harmful effect." It adds that the danger from radioactivity is nil, and that the company is doing everything it can to put electric lines underground. It concludes that "the use of electricity produces no pollution at all."

The statement about radioactive danger is debatable; the other three are demonstrably false. Thermal pollution, for example, is known to affect the metabolism, feeding habits, growth rate, and reproduction patterns of water life. Some fish refuse to cross a warm water "barrier" to get to their spawning grounds; such species die out in the fact of thermal pollution. Heated water also affects micro-organisms and plant life, permanently altering a river's ecology. All these facts are well-established, and presumably well-known to PG&E.

Immediately after the Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969, the city's Chamber of Commerce began an extensive newspaper and television advertising campaign in nine Western cities, clearly designed to rebuild Santa Barbara's reputation as a tourist resort. Typical headlines read "Santa Barbara Like It Is Today" and "Come Play with Us This Summer." The closest the ads came to mentioning the oil disaster was the line: "Santa Barbara is as enjoyable today as it was last year and all the years before." Yet oil slick still spots the beaches of Santa Barbara at least half the time.

The Santa Barbara ad campaign has been attacked by a number of interested groups, from Get Oil Out (GOO) to *Advertising Age* magazine. In an unusually strong editorial, the latter noted:

> The ads are bad because they are written to tell a story that those preparing the ads acknowledge is not true. For example, one of the captions under a picture in the ad reads, "People are relaxing, playing and strolling on our beaches today." Yet Richard L. Ehler, account supervisor at the local agency which prepared the ads, Chace Co., told *Advertising Age,* "We have days when some oil will come in, and it will vanish the next day. . . . Depending if there's a good strong wind from the water, it blows the oil in, but half the time the beaches are fine."[3]

The final example of factually inaccurate environmental advertising was produced by the Ethyl Corporation, a leading manufacturer of the lead anti-knock additives used in gasoline. The company's advertising slogan is "Let's do something about pollution. But let's do the *right thing.*"

The ads, of course, argue that unleaded gasolines are not the right thing. One typical ad claimed that unleaded gasolines "could also produce considerably more of certain chemical compounds (toxic substances) which not only can increase eye-irritating smog but can be harmful to your general health." Asked to explain this claim to the California State Air Resources Board, Ethyl representatives testified that the oil companies were likely to replace the lead with such octane-boosting "aromatic" chemicals as benzene, toluene, and xylene. They alleged that these substances not only cause smog, but have also been linked to cancer in laboratory animals.

When pressed for proof, Ethyl backed down. It reluctantly admitted that it had no evidence that oil companies really intended to add more aromatics to their gas, and no evidence that doing so would adversely affect public health. It also agreed that most gasolines already contain significant amounts of aromatic chemicals, and that their lead content alone may be sufficient to pose a health hazard.[4] In other words, it admitted that its advertisement was factually inaccurate.

The borderline between a factually inaccurate advertisement and a misleading one is extremely hazy. The most widely discussed environmental advertising campaign to date is the Standard Oil of California campaign for Chevron gasoline's additive, F-310. This researcher would classify most of the Chevron ads as factually inaccurate. They are more frequently labeled, however, as misleading.

F-310 is a gasoline detergent additive. It helps clean out dirty engines, such as those found in very old cars. Since dirty engines emit more unburned hydrocarbons and more carbon monoxide than clean engines, F-310 significantly reduces the output of those pollutants. It does so, however, only on very dirty engines and only for the first few tankfuls. Once an engine is reasonably clean, F-310 is of no further use. Moreover, detergent additives do nothing whatever about ozone, nitrogen oxides, or lead–the three most important components of smog and air pollution. Most important, detergent additives have been customarily added to gasolines for several decades. F-310 may indeed be a new formula; that fact is disputed. It is certainly not a new kind of formula.

The ads (including two full-page examples in the *Chronicle* sample) claim otherwise. "NEW," they shout. "The most outstanding development in automotive fuel technology in years." "Now, research scientists at Standard Oil Company of California have achieved the most long-awaited gasoline development in history." The campaign is very dramatic. It features balloons and plastic bags, statistics and testimonials, all orchestrated by ex-astronaut Scott Carpenter.

Much of the debate over F-310 has centered on whether or not it works. California's Air Resources Board, among others, found that it did not; similar groups have found that it did. But unless F-310 is really new, and really works a great deal better than other detergent additives, the ads must be termed misleading.

Shortly after the F-310 campaign began, the Federal Trade Commission reached the tentative conclusion that the advertisements were misleading to the point of illegality. It proposed that California Standard voluntarily withdraw the ads–which the company refused to do. The case is now being adjudicated.

The FTC's major objection to the F-310 campaign was simply that the additive is neither new nor significantly different from competing additives. But the Commission also charged the company with false advertising on several other grounds:

(1) A specially formulated gasoline was used to simulate a dirty engine and produce black exhaust for comparison with the F-310 exhaust. (A Chevron spokesman later admitted fooling with the gas mixture a bit to give the ad more impact.)

(2) The ads and commercials were staged outside a building labeled "Standard Oil Co. of California Research Center." Actually, the building was the Riverside County Courthouse.

(3) A local resident claimed that she watched the commercials being filmed. She saw two large, inflated balloons–one clear, the other jet black. Neither was attached to any car.

(4) The "clean" balloon in the televised test actually contained large amounts of invisible pollutants, including even carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. All it was missing was carbon particles from the specially contrived dirty engine.

After reviewing the charges and counter-charges, the ***Wall Street Journal*** entitled its article on the subject, "Chevron's F-310 Gas: A Lesson In How Not to Promote a Product."[5]

The Federal Trade Commission had two objections to the F-310 campaign: The ads falsely claimed that F-310 was something new and different, and the demonstration was faked. The issue in both cases was truth; the FTC was concerned that the ads would mislead consumers into buying the product. But the F-310 campaign was misleading in another, more basic, sense as well. By implying that F-310 was a major breakthrough in pollution control, the ads also implied that motorists need no longer worry about automotive air pollution. From an environmental standpoint, the ads would be dangerously misleading even if they were true and unfaked, because they would encourage people to conclude (falsely) that automotive air pollution was no longer a serious problem.

The word "misleading" thus has two different meanings when applied to environmental advertising. An ad may mislead the consumer into a false view of the product, thus violating the FTC's standard of truth. Or it may mislead him into a false view of the environment, thus violating the ecologist's standard of environmental responsibility. The F-310 campaign does both.

The implications of the two standards are quite different. In 1970, the Southern California Edison Corporation ran a newspaper ad with a photo of a healthy lobster over the caption, "He likes our nuclear plant." A local marine biologist later complained that the ad agency had borrowed a lobster from his tanks to photograph. He said he and his lobsters definitely did not approve of nuclear power plants.[6]

From a straightforward "truth in advertising" standpoint, the only flaw in this ad is that the lobster did not come from the nuclear power plant site. But that is not, of course, the environmentalist's objection. He would be no happier if the lobster were cheerfully addicted to radiation. Lobsters have little or nothing to do with the dangers of thermal pollution and radioactivity. And so *any* nuclear power plant ad that features a healthy lobster is, in the environmental sense, misleading.

Probably the most frequent kind of environmental irresponsibility in advertising is environmental irrelevance. Much environmental advertising appears to have little to do with environmental deterioration and its solution.

The most obvious example is the buzz word advertisement. Ads that talk about Murine for "eye pollution" and Lark cigarettes to "Stop Smogging" add nothing to the ecological dialogue. And they may conceivably debase the currency of that dialogue. It is at least possible that the use of words like "smog" and "pollution" in an irrelevant context diminishes their power to move people.

Irrelevance is also the objectionable characteristic of many quasi-environmental advertisements–those that deal with environment-related products or services without dealing with their environmental implications. The typical detergent advertisement, for example, says nothing whatever about the environmental dangers of phosphate pollution.[7] The typical real estate ad does not mention the cancer of unplanned urban growth. The typical automobile ad does not warn of the problem of automotive air pollution. To those who consider these issues critically important to human survival, this seems the height of irresponsibility.

Many environmental advertisements adroitly finesse the major issue. A typical ad in the *Business Week* sample, for instance, was placed by the Koppers Company, a manufacturer of laminated electric transmission towers. The ad featured a photograph of a graceful, modernistic Koppers tower, with the headline, "Don't stop progress. Just make it gracefully." The implication is that a few talented engineers and perhaps a sculptor-in-residence are all that is needed to solve the environmental problems of electric power generation.

A nationally distributed Shell Oil advertisement features a color photograph of two young boys fishing in a rowboat. The headline reads: "Last year we saved a lot of fish from drowning. And made a lot of kids happy." The copy begins by admitting that soaps and detergents can pollute the water. But Shell has the answer. Shell's NEODOL 25 "makes detergents lose their sudsability before they reach our rivers and streams. . . . Fish no longer have to swim in bubble baths. . . . Now they have a sporting chance."

Thomas Turner (who coined the phrase "eco-pornography" to describe environmental advertising) comments on this particular ad as follows:

> Actually, suds don't pollute. Foam has always been easily handled by ecosystems. The soaping or detergent action is done by agents independent of the foam. So the removal of suds could amount only to elimination of the pollution indicator, while the pollutant itself is present as always.[8]

Shell's ad may well be entirely accurate. It is nonetheless environmentally irrelevant, misleading, and irresponsible.

The judgment of environmental responsibility depends greatly on the judge's view on the imminence of environmental destruction and the feasibility of technological solutions. One of the ads in the *Business Week* sample was a straightforward sales pitch for the pollution-control devices manufactured by the Engelhard Minerals and Chemicals Corporation. This ad is typical of more than half the environmental advertisements found in *Business Week*. To most observers (including this researcher) it would seem entirely innocent.

But adman Jerry Manders offers the following impassioned analysis:

> Engelhard is one of those companies which offer technological "solutions" to environmental pollution. The way to stop the chemical pollution of water, for example, is through "better" chemicals. But such solutions ignore the basic tenets of ecology. Putting one kind of chemical into the water, instead of another kind, just gives you a different kind of pollution.[9]

It is by no means necessary to accept Mander's extreme position in order to judge many environmental ads to be irresponsible. A national campaign by the Atlantic Richfield Company boasts of ARCO's plans to "plant a lawn" in the Alaskan tundra, using specially developed winter-hardy seeds and fertilizers. The punchline: "It's just one of the many steps ARCO is taking to see to it that the world we live in is just a little bit better than when we started."

The ad obscures the fact that all ARCO has so far is plans on paper–no timetable, no commitment, not even a date for the eventual go/no-go decision. Furthermore, as Thomas Turner points out, the ad fails to mention that ARCO has no idea yet whether or not the exotic grasses will grow in the arctic tundra. Most agronomists, Turner claims, think they will not. Turner adds that it is entirely possible the alien plantings would do more harm than good to the Alaskan ecology.[10]

Also conspicuously missing from the ad is the nature of ARCO's business–which turns out to be oil. Unknown to the average reader, the Atlantic Richfield Company is the spearhead of the Alaskan oil pipeline project, which has been opposed by nearly every conservation group in the country. The tundra grass is part of the oil industry's attempt to gain public and government approval for the pipeline. What the ad treats as an example of ARCO's generous ecological responsibility might well be seen as a pitifully small recompense for ARCO's incredible ecological irresponsibility.

The ARCO ad may well be misleading in the Federal Trade Commission sense–it deviates rather too greatly from truth, leading people to think better of Atlantic Richfield than they ought. But it is also misleading in an environmental sense. It encourages people to believe that the oil invasion of Alaska presents no major threat. It encourages them to trust in halfway solutions to desperate problems. And in the company of hundreds of similar ads, it encourages them to count on the corporate establishment for environmental protection.

This last failing is characteristic of many environmental advertisements, especially corporate image ads. A General Motors ad in the *Chronicle* sample asks the question: "Does GM care about cleaner air?" It goes on to list all the things GM has done to reduce automotive air pollution. The ad neglects to mention that everything GM has done about air pollution has been under government regulation or the threat of government regulation. And it neglects to add that much more needs to be done, and GM is dragging its heels.

Any time a company exaggerates its own environmental responsibility for image purposes, it not only misleads people about the company. It also misleads people about the likelihood of environmental improvement without radical action. When Bethlehem Steel touts its minimal reforestation efforts, it helps to lessen public concern about the environmental effects of strip mining. When Humble Oil talks about the oil field it turned into a bird sanctuary, it helps to distract the public from the environmental depredations of the petroleum industry. The fact that both ads are accurate does not prevent them from having unfortunate (and misleading) effects on public attitudes toward environmental problems.

Sales Management magazine recently reported that the Scott Paper Company was considering a line of "environmental" products, manufactured from reclaimed and recycled paper instead of trees. As the litter problem worsens, the article noted, reclamation and recycling gain in public appeal. A Scott executive is quoted as saying: "First, we would need to know if the public is sufficiently environment-minded before we would promote the line."[11]

Notice that Scott is not simply planning to recycle its paper without talking about it. It is not even planning to recycle its paper and then talk about it. It is planning to recycle its paper if and only if talking about it would produce enough additional sales to justify the move economically. The entire recycling project is (will be? would be?) an advertising venture.[12]

Like many of the advertising failings reported in this chapter, image manipulation is an established part of the advertising business. Since the public is currently susceptible to environmental pitches, environmental pitches are inevitably forthcoming in large quantities. A company's self-interest is seldom served by genuine contributions to environmental protection, but it is well served by the illusion of such contributions.[13] Only a true iconoclast would object to environmental image manipulation on traditional "truth in advertising" grounds; the ads are well within the established limits of acceptable puffery. Objections grounded on environmental responsibility, however, deserve more serious attention.

Some environmental advertising is objectionable not because it falsely boasts of environmental responsibility, but because it accurately boasts of environmental irresponsibility. Most ads of this sort are quasi-environmental; the products and services advertised are environmentally questionable. Many are environmental advertisements as well.

In May 1970, the International Paper Company began a new national magazine campaign, featuring a full-page color photograph of an infant clothed in a disposable diaper. The facing page carried the headline:

"The Story of the Disposable Environment." The copy described in detail all the throw-away baby products manufactured by International Paper—Flushabye diapers, disposable sheets, pillow cases, blankets, and even disposable furniture. It ended with the almost unbelievable line: "The disposable environment—the kind of fresh thinking we bring to every problem." Thomas Turner justly calls this ad "the top contender in the Eco-Pornography Sweepstakes of 1970."[14]

In response to the complaints of environmentalists, International Paper withdrew the advertisement soon after the start of the campaign. It substituted a $125,000 campaign to explain the company's ecological responsibility in managing its forests and paper plants.[15] Consumer advertising for the products themselves continued unabated, but with little emphasis on the "disposable" theme.

Advertisements occasionally seem to go out of their way to incorporate an environmentally offensive theme. An ad in the ***Business Week*** sample from the Continental Insurance Companies features a full-page sketch of what purports to be a prototypic industrial plant, belching smoke from every chimney. The headline on the facing page reads: "How many policies do you think it would take to insure this company?" The rest of the ad is entirely innocent; it discusses Continental's Comprehensive Business Policy. The sketch itself is environmentally objectionable. The kind of company illustrated should not be permitted to exist. Certainly Continental should not aim its ads (or appear to aim its ads) at the owners of such companies.

"If Avis rents you a Plymouth with over 19,000 miles on the odometer, you can keep it," reads an ad from the *Chronicle* sample. The auto rental business ranks high in environmental responsibility—but not when it gives the appearance of junking serviceable cars after less than a year. Also typical of environmentally offensive pitches are the following: "Our little Sprite is a sporty, spunky, prowly, growly BOMB (Austin Healey Sprite)." "More dammed water than you'll ever use (State of Tennessee)." "Dixie went to a lot of trouble to bring you a beautiful new bathroom cup, just so you could throw it away (Dixie Cups)." "If all the people who rent our cars, fly in our airplanes, see our movies, listen to our records, buy our insurance, borrow our money and take our advice ever meet in New York, it would sink (New York Metropolitan Life)."

The deficiencies of environmental advertising discussed in this chapter can be arranged into a typology. The categories are by no means air-tight, but they may nonetheless be useful.

An environmental advertisement can fall short of the traditional "truth" criterion in three ways. It may be factually inaccurate, factually misleading (in the consumer-protection sense), or fraudulently staged.

An ad can fall short of the "environmental responsibility" criterion in two ways. First, it may be environmentally misleading. This category includes environmentally irrelevant ads, as well as image ads that falsely encourage people to depend on the corporate establishment for environmental solutions. The irrelevant ads may be further subdivided into those that ignore the environment entirely although they touch on environment-related issues, and those that concentrate on cosmetic, super-technological, or other inappropriate solutions. The second major category of environmentally irresponsible ads consists of those whose content is a direct affront to the environment.

In outline form, the typology looks something like this:

I. "Truth" criterion
  A. Factually inaccurate
  B. Factually misleading to the consumer
  C. Fraudulently staged
II. "Environmental responsibility" criterion
  A. Environmentally misleading
    1. Environmentally irrelevant
      a. Ignoring the environment
      b. Suggesting inappropriate solutions
    2. Suggesting corporate environmental responsibility
  B. Direct affronts to the environment

No attempt has been made here to estimate the number of environmentally irresponsible advertisements in the mass media. It has been sufficient to show that the amount of environmental advertising, and the amount of environmentally irresponsible advertising, is great enough to justify the attention of scholars and media decision-makers.

Advertising Versus News: An Effectiveness Study

How effective is environmental advertising? In particular, how effective is environmental advertising in the face of news coverage that tends to contradict it?

These questions are well worth examining. For if environmental advertising is not particularly effective–not particularly successful in changing the attitudes and behavior of its audience–then the problem to which this dissertation is devoted is probably not a serious one. And if environmental news is capable of cancelling the effects of environmental advertising, then that solution is probably the most appropriate one. If, on the other hand, environmental advertising is effective even in the face of contradictory news content, then more stringent advertising acceptance standards may well be the only answer.

Unfortunately, such questions are considerably easier to ask than they are to answer. The measurement of advertising effectiveness is one of the most difficult methodological problems in the social sciences. Decades of research and millions of dollars have been devoted to the task, with extremely limited results. Though some progress has been made, it is fair to say that no advertiser today can accurately and rigorously assess the effects of an advertising campaign. There is much more of art than of science in the field of advertising.[16]

Typically, an advertiser is interested in a single output: sales. Yet he is forced to deal with a wide range of inputs: price, product quality, promotional activities, competitive behavior, weather, world events, and of course advertising strategy. Both the output and the many inputs are measurable, but the contribution of each input to the output cannot be measured unless the inputs are controlled. This is impossible. An advertiser may find that increased sales follow the introduction of a new advertising campaign. Yet literally dozens of other variations that paralleled the new campaign are equally plausible explanations for the change in sales. He knows he has been successful, but he cannot know why.

For an outsider trying to assess the effectiveness of an advertising campaign, the problem is still more difficult. The advertising studies commissioned by a private corporation are almost never made available to those outside the company. Even sales and advertising volume figures are likely to be proprietary and confidential. Moreover, an advertiser is able to gain some measure of control over his input variables by testing his advertisements in matched or randomized markets while attempting to hold other factors constant. Sophisticated statistical techniques are available to him for sorting out the contribution of each controlled or measured variable. The outsider, of course, must choose his ads from the real world, with no opportunity whatever to control relevant factors.

In addition, the advertiser's task is simplified by his interest in just a single output variable: sales. Outsiders are likely to be concerned with more complex sorts of effects. The impact of an environmental advertisement on sales is of less importance to this dissertation than the ad's impact on public attitudes toward the environment. The latter effect is likely to be cumulative, involving many different advertisements and advertisers. It is extremely difficult to isolate and measure. Second-order effects–such as the impact of unfavorable news content on advertising effectiveness–are even more resistant to measurement.

There is no solution to these problems. Even with the collaboration of environmental advertisers and a major investment of time and money, it would be very difficult to obtain meaningful data on the sales effectiveness and non-sales effects of environmental advertising. Without such a collaboration and such an investment it is probably impossible. One is forced to rely on uncontrolled and incomplete data, supplemented by the intuitions of experts.

And even the intuitions of experts are by no means unanimous. The unprecedented volume of environmental advertising testifies to the conviction of many advertisers (perhaps bolstered by confidential research results) that environmental ads are effective. A wide variety of products are promoted on the basis of environmental appeals. A wide variety of corporations build their images on the issue of environmental responsibility. The men behind these advertisements are clearly convinced that they accomplish what they are intended to accomplish.

Yet many competing products and corporations make little or no use of environmental pitches. *Their* advertising departments are doubtless convinced that such pitches are ineffective.[17]

Examples of successful and unsuccessful environmental advertising campaigns are easy to find–and impossible to interpret. In 1970, General Motors test-marketed a $20 auto pollution control kit. It spent $50,000 advertising the product in Phoenix, Arizona, only to sell a grand total of 528 kits. In Portland, Oregon, meanwhile, the Blitz-Weinhard brewery launched an extensive advertising campaign for recycled (returnable) beer bottles. Returnable sales went up 21 percent; one-ways down 14 percent.[18] Why did one environmental campaign fail so miserably while the other was such an astounding success? The answer is unknown.

We have made case studies of two environmental advertising campaigns: (1) Standard Oil of California's gasoline additive, F-310; and (2) Low-phosphate and non-phosphate detergents. These two products have three similarities of importance. First, both are in industries with extremely low product differentiation; the average citizen believes that all gasolines and all detergents are pretty much alike. Second, both have been extensively advertised on environmental grounds. And third, both have had to face large-scale non-environmental advertising from their competitors. (For purposes of this study one need not determine whether F-310 and low-phosphate detergents are genuinely superior to their competitors. What is important is that the ads claim superiority on environmental grounds.)

There is one crucial difference between F-310 and low-phosphate detergents: The impact of news coverage. Shortly after the introduction of F-310, news stories began to appear about the opposition of various groups to the additive and its advertising. For at least four months it had what must be termed a very bad press. Low-phosphate detergents, on the other hand, have had an extraordinarily good press. Innumerable articles have appeared on the dangers of detergent phosphates, and lists of phosphate content by brand have received major play in the media.

The task of both advertising campaigns is the same–to entice customers of other gasolines and detergents into changing brands. Conversion is, of course, the most difficult of all attitude changes to achieve.[19] However, both F-310 and low-phosphate detergents have at their disposal an essentially new appeal: environmental responsibility. They therefore have no need to alter the established attitudes of their audience. Instead, they may attempt to build a new attitude on a new issue. This is a much easier task, and one at which the mass media are much more adept.[20]

The most powerful weapon in the arsenal of advertising is repetition. The persuasive efficacy of repetition is well established, both in and out of advertising.[21] The two major persuasive liabilities of advertising, on the other hand, are low source credibility and the inevitable presence of competing (contradictory) advertising messages. The relevance of both variables to attitude-change effectiveness is well established.[22]

In the context of competing messages, an important difference between the F-310 and the low-phosphate campaigns should be noted. Like most advertisements, both campaigns were essentially "one-sided"–the sorts of appeals most likely to be rendered ineffective by competing content from other sources. But in the detergent case, the competing content ignored almost completely the environmental issue raised by the low-phosphate advertisements; ads for high-phosphate detergents seldom mentioned the environment. In the case of F-310, on the other hand, competing manufacturers were quick to advance their own environmental claims. The F-310 message, then, was more directly contradicted by competitors than the low-phosphate message. It was therefore less likely to be effective.

These three variables–repetition, source credibility, and competing messages–have as much impact on news effectiveness as they do on advertising effectiveness.[23] But the impact is precisely the opposite. News is repeated far less often than advertisements. It is much higher in credibility, and much less likely to be contradicted by other media content.

When news and advertising content are consonant, one possible source of competing messages is eliminated. The believability of the advertising appeal is improved by the addition of new, high-credibility news sources. And the impact of advertising repetition is enhanced by further repetition in a different context.[24]

When news and advertising content are dissonant, the cancelling effect of competing messages is most likely to come into play. Despite low repetition, the high credibility of the news is likely to do significant damage to advertising effectiveness.

The F-310 advertising campaign, then, was directly contradicted by two kinds of media content:

competing advertisements (high repetition, low credibility) and news (low repetition, high credibility). The low-phosphate advertising campaign, on the other hand, was only indirectly contradicted by competing advertisements, and was directly substantiated by the news. If it is possible for an environmental advertising campaign to fail, the F-310 campaign should fail. If it is possible for an environmental advertising campaign to succeed, the low-phosphate campaign should succeed. (One would speculate that advertising campaigns neither supported nor contradicted by news content, which is the most usual case, would be intermediate in their effectiveness. News content in the absence of consonant or dissonant advertising would presumably also have intermediate effects.)

Of course it is always extremely dangerous to generalize from a single case study. The F-310 campaign was doubtless distinguished by some characteristics not typical of all advertisements faced with heavy contradiction from other sources. The low-phosphate detergent campaign was doubtless distnguished by some characteristics not typical of all advertisements blessed with little contradiction and much support from other sources. These unique characteristics are, for the most part, unmeasured and unknown. Many are unmeasurable and unknowable–but undeniably present all the same.

Nonetheless, these two cases were chosen for study in the hope that they would represent ideal types. If even the low-phosphate campaign was ineffective, then environmental advertising is probably not a serious problem. If even the F-310 campaign was effective, then more aggressive news coverage is probably not an adequate solution. If the low-phosphate campaign was effective but the F-310 campaign was ineffective, then environmental advertising is presumably a serious problem, but one which is at least potentially solvable through more aggressive news coverage instead of more stringent advertising acceptance standards.

The hypothesis, of course, is that both campaigns were effective–that environmental advertising *is* a serious problem and that the only viable solution is more stringent advertising acceptance standards.

The F-310 campaign will be examined first, followed by the low-phosphate campaign.

Chevron gasoline is the principal consumer product of the Standard Oil Company of California, the eighth largest gasoline retailer in the United States and the largest on the West Coast.

In 1967, the Socal advertising department decided that contests, games, and sales promotions–which had dominated Chevron advertising for three years–had nearly outlived their usefulness.[25] The public was getting tired of such gimmicks, and the government was getting suspicious of them.[26] It was time to move back into the product area, to design an advertising campaign based on product superiority.

In pursuit of this goal, the advertising department commissioned a public opinion poll, to determine what issues were uppermost in the minds of consumers. It also scheduled a series of meetings with the marketing department and the research department, to find out what was new and different about the product.

The poll revealed three top-priority issues: crime, race, and air pollution. The meetings revealed one area of significant research progress: gasoline additives designed to improve mileage and performance. Someone thought to ask whether the additives also had a beneficial effect on exhaust pollutants. The answer was yes, and an advertising campaign was born.

Chevron's principal additive at that time was F-221, a detergent formula whose cleaning action was concentrated in the carburetor. The additive was sufficiently effective that it had been sold to several competing manufacturers. (This is apparently a common procedure in the petroleum industry. Shortly after the introduction of F-310, that additive was also offered to competitors, but the Federal Trade Commission's complaint forestalled any sales. According to Frank Fenton of the Socal advertising department, such sales would have no effect on F-310 advertising. "We wouldn't sell the name," he said. "We could still say that only Chevron has F-310.") It had never been the basis for any advertising. A series of tests, carried out at the behest of the advertising department, revealed that F-221 was only slightly superior to the additives in other brands of gasoline (those brands that had not purchased F-221 itself). As Frank Fenton of the Socal advertising department put it, "Our product was better, but not enough better to hang our hat on."

At this point the advertising, marketing, and research departments consulted with top management, which agreed that a crash program for a new additive was in order. Work continued throughout 1968 and into 1969. It culminated in the development of F-310. Socal claims F-310 is a deposit-control additive as well as a detergent additive, and works not only in the carburetor but also in the PCV valve. It is thus more effective than simple detergent additives in controlling pollution and also in improving mileage and performance. (This claim has been challenged by the Federal Trade Commission and several competitors, who argue that F-310 is no more than a combination of detergent additives. The truth of Socal's claims is, of course, irrelevant to the effectiveness of its advertising. Credibility is a correlate of advertising effectiveness, and one would hope that credibility bore some relation to truth. But it is never necessary to assess the truth of an advertising claim in order to measure its effects.)

The discovery of F-310 was immediately reported to the advertising department, and a series of top-level discussions was scheduled. Two questions were under consideration: whether to add F-310 to Chevron gasoline, and whether to base an extensive advertising campaign on the addition of F-310. These were by no means independent decisions. "It cost millions of dollars to add F-310 to the gasoline," explained Fenton. "The company would not have added the additive if we couldn't advertise it successfully. You don't make a major improvement in your product without telling the public about it."

The decision to stress the pollution-control aspect of F-310 instead of its performance aspect was based on both research and intuition. "The average member of the public doesn't know a valve from a piston," said Harry C. Honstein of the Socal advertising department. "He doesn't relate to performance. Pictures of dirty carburetors versus clean carburetors"–Honstein has such pictures ready on his desk–"aren't very effective on TV. People relate to air pollution, maybe to mileage, but definitely not to performance." When this decision was made, early in 1969, no one at Standard Oil of California realized how big an issue air pollution would be just one year later. Earth Day was still a far-off dream of conservationist quacks.

Socal's advertising agency, Batten Barton Durstine & Osborn, spent most of 1969 planning and preparing the F-310 campaign. A list of 25 before-and-after demonstrations was prepared. All 25 were tried out on test cars and test audiences, and five were selected for filming: plastic balloons attached to the exhaust pipes, burning torches attached to the exhaust pipes, hydrocarbon meters attached to the exhaust pipes, plastic bags surrounding the cars, and carbon smudges on the garage door.

BBD&O decided that a spokesman with high name recognition and a reputation for integrity was needed to explain the tests. Its first choice was astronaut Wally Schirra, but he was rejected because of a conflict of interest; Schirra was part-owner of another oil company and was already doing ads for a railroad. Scott Carpenter, another astronaut, was selected instead. After checking out Socal's research data and conferring with its research department, Carpenter accepted the job.

In October of 1969, Socal began filming its commercials and preparing its advertisements. Also in October, it began phasing out all its regular advertising, intentionally creating a lull before the giant campaign to come.

The F-310 campaign began on January 1, 1970, in Hawaii and Southern California. Within the next three months it was introduced throughout the Socal marketing area. *Newsweek* magazine describes a typical TV commercial:

> The television commercial focuses on a giant plastic balloon attached to the tailpipe of a white 1966 Chevrolet. The narrator, none other than ex-astronaut Scott Carpenter, begins speaking: "You're about to see proof of one of the most meaningful gasoline achievements in history. We've attached a balloon to this test car to show how dirty exhaust emissions go into the air." Sure enough, the balloon looks solid black, like shiny patent leather–but then there is a dissolve to the same car, supposedly 2,000 miles and "six tankfuls of Chevron formula F-310 later." Now the balloon is clear and transparent. "Proof," says ex-astronaut Carpenter, that Chevron with F-310 turns dirty exhaust into good clean mileage."[27]

Socal officials are reluctant to reveal the extent of the advertising push in January of 1970, except to say that they "spent appreciably more on F-310 than ever before." Some measure of how much more can be inferred from the figures for spot television advertising. According to *Advertising Age* magazine, Socal's spot TV expenditures in 1969 came to roughly $2,926,000. For 1970, the figure was $4,386,000–an increase of almost precisely 50 percent.[28] The bulk of that increase, Fenton admits, was concentrated in the early months of 1970.

According to Fenton, the media mix for the F-310 campaign was similar to the 1969 mix, with two minor exceptions–a somewhat heavier investment in magazines, and a considerably lighter investment in billboards (in conformance to the Highway Beautification program). The following figures are based on the assumption of a fifty percent increase in each advertising medium:

Medium	1969[29]	1970 (est.)
Newspapers	$1,001,000	$ 1,501,000
Magazines	244,000	366,000
Farm publications	459,000	689,000
Business publications	654,000	981,000
Spot TV	2,926,000	4,386,000
Network TV	863,000	1,295,000
Spot radio	2,017,000	3,026,000
Outdoor	464,000	696,000
TOTAL	$8,628,000	$12,940,000

How successful was Socal's $13-million campaign for F-310? In the early weeks of 1970, it was enormously successful. "The impact was phenomenal," recalls Honstein. "People were pouring into the stations." In Los Angeles, Chevron sales for the first three weeks of January were up 25 percent over the December figures.

But by the end of January the competition had begun to fight back. "Somebody thinks they've made a discovery," advertised the Union Oil Company. "We've had an effective engine-cleaning detergent for 14 years. They've just reported their breakthrough. All automobiles which have been driven regularly on Union 76 gasolines have clean carburetors and clean anti-pollution valves. You cannot improve the performance of these cars in the area of more mileage or in the area of reduced exhaust emission by using the so-called 'new' gasoline that has recently been publicized."[30]

Added the Mobil Oil Corporation: "It's nice to see another gasoline on sale that can help reduce the air pollution in Los Angeles. Mobil Detergent Gasoline has been doing this all over the country since we introduced it. Two years ago."[31]

By February 1, 1970, nearly every major gasoline retailer in Southern California was extensively advertising its own anti-pollution additive. Frank Fenton of Socal calls this "me-too advertising." It might better be called "them-too advertising," for the consistent theme was that Chevron was a latecomer to the pollution-control business. The ads completely ignored the fact that Chevron, too, had had a detergent additive for years, and the claim (Fenton calls it a fact) that F-310 was more than just another detergent.

The effect of these advertising rebuttals is impossible to assess, for they were accompanied by a much more serious form of competition–price wars. Within weeks after the introduction of F-310, the majority of Chevron's competitors were underselling it by a considerable margin–from five cents a gallon up as high as eleven cents a gallon. The normal response would have been for Chevron to cut its prices as well. Instead, the Socal top management (against the advice of its retailing department) decided to retain its regular price.

Almost immediately, Chevron's gains disappeared. By mid-February, Socal's share of the market in Southern California was back to 1969 levels. Even this was a phenomenal achievement in the face of such a monumental price differential. Socal was selling as much gasoline as it had before the introduction of F-310, and was earning five to eleven cents more than the competition on every gallon. Bob Roberts of *California Oil World* was one of several commentators who speculated that the success of F-310 might put an end to gasoline price wars once and for all.[32]

In mid-February of 1970, Chevron's competitors raised their prices back up to normal. Chevron sales immediately climbed almost to the mid-January level. The competition reduced its prices once more, and Chevron sales fell slightly below the mid-February level (which was also the 1969 level). This oscillation continued through April. Each time the competition's prices went up, Chevron sales increased; each time the competition's prices went down, Chevron sales decreased. But the increases were smaller with every swing, and the decreases were greater. When Los Angeles gasoline prices finally stabilized in mid-April, Chevron sales were perceptibly below the 1969 level.

For the first few months of 1970, Chevron profits in Southern California were undoubtedly higher than the profits of the competition–not because Socal sold more gasoline, but because it sold the gasoline at a much higher price. But with each new wave of the price war, the loyalty of Chevron's customers was further eroded. A significant fraction of those who switched away from Chevron because of the price differential apparently failed to return when prices stabilized. F-310 helped slow this process, but (perhaps because of the virulence of competing advertising) it was unable to stop it.

These relationships are further complicated by the introduction of a third variable–unfavorable news publicity. In late February of 1970, the People's Lobby, a Los Angeles consumer-conservationist group, filed suit against Socal on grounds of false advertising for F-310. The action was well covered in the local media, and the story was picked up by many newspapers throughout the West Coast as well.

From that time on, F-310 had a very bad press. (The complaints of Socal executives about unfair media treatment, though clearly self-serving, are probably somewhat justified. Reporters who were too busy—or too lazy—in January to check out Socal's claims were equally disinclined in later months to look carefully at the claims of Socal's opponents.) Between February and September of 1970, the following events took place and were duly reported in the media: a committee of the Hawaii State Senate criticized F-310 and its advertising; a resident of Palm Springs claimed to have watched while F-310 commercials were faked; the California State Air Resources Board revealed tests showing F-310 to be ineffective; several conservation groups filed suit against Socal for false F-310 advertising; the Federal Trade Commission accused Socal of false and misleading advertising for F-310.

(In a brief before the Federal Trade Commission (Docket No. 8827), Socal argues persuasively that the FTC hopes to use the F-310 case to set a precedent for new sanctions against false advertisers. The FTC apparently wants the case to go to court, and has been unwilling to specify what changes in F-310 advertising would satisfy its complaint.)

The response of Socal to the competitive advertising, price wars, and unfavorable publicity was minimal. Chevron's pricing posture held firm throughout 1970. Except for a one-shot "rebuttal" of the Federal Trade Commission in September, Chevron's advertising unfolded in 1970 precisely as it had been planned in 1969. A move toward low-lead and unleaded gasolines in September (sometimes interpreted as a response to criticism of F-310) had been planned more than a year before.

In March of 1971, Chevron advertising dropped Carpenter and the before-and-after demonstrations, and switched to a testimonial campaign, stressing mileage and performance equally with emission control. Two months later, Socal inaugurated a cookbook giveaway promotion. At the same time, its product advertising adopted the "Action Age" slogan, featuring professional race drivers claiming top performance from Chevron's low-lead gasoline. Except as an occasional tagline and a sign on the pumps, F-310 was dead.

For the entire year, 1970, Socal's share of the California gasoline market was 17.46 percent, significantly below the 1969 figure of 18.74 percent. Nationally, Socal's share of the market declined from 5.21 percent in 1969 to 5.02 percent in 1970.[33] In terms of sales, then, the F-310 campaign must be termed a failure.

Why did it fail? Frank Fenton blames unfavorable news coverage. "The FTC charges," he says, "were the crowning glory. That was what did us in." Elsewhere, Fenton has written:

> Public awareness and recall of our advertising of F-310 increased for the first few months about three-fold, and our various sales claims were remembered by more than fifty percent. . . . A large majority of the public believed the claims for F-310 during the early months of the campaign. Toward late 1970, the publicity of the FTC action, plus other adverse publicity, had caused a significant erosion in the public's believability and acceptance of our claims. We believe this was due in large part to the FTC publication of charges which numbered several they later withdrew. In our view, of course, the loss of public confidence—to the degree that may have occurred—in F-310 has been contrary to the public interest.[34]

Claude I. Allen of the Socal marketing research department emphatically disagrees. "The effect of bad publicity," he says, "was so small it is impossible to measure–if indeed there was any effect at all. Total sales are off because of an incredibly foolish pricing posture, an almost unprecedented decision to hold the price level despite price cutting on the part of the competition. If we had tried that pricing policy without the advantages of F-310, most of our dealers would have been out of business. With F-310, we barely managed to hold our own."

One piece of data would seem to favor Fenton's explanation over Allen's. This is the failure of Chevron to recoup its losses after prices stabilized in mid-April. Allen admits that publicity may have had something to do with that failure. But he thinks it was more likely due to the fact that "by then every company had its own additives and its own additive advertisements." In addition, Allen notes that "a lot of people were still angry about the price. And many customers who switched because of price stayed away for reasons that had nothing to do with price *or* publicity."

Several items would seem to favor Allen's interpretation over Fenton's. First is the fact that Chevron sales had already fallen below the 1969 level as early as April. While there had been some unfavorable publicity before that time, the major blows to F-310 prestige–the Air Resources Board findings and the Federal Trade Commission complaint–came later.

Second, several observers noted the danger of Socal's pricing posture long before unfavorable publicity became an issue. In early February of 1970, West Coast Editor Mark Emond of *National Petroleum News* magazine quoted a Chevron sales representative to the effect that the company was losing the benefit of F-310 "by spotting the competition 5¢ per gallon." Emond went on to speculate that Socal might be intentionally holding sales down by holding the price up: "Socal's management presumably would be able to call the tune on how much of the market they think it's seemly to get."[35]

Third, Allen's department maintains a running tabulation of comments from the questionnaire responses returned by owners of dormant Chevron credit cards. Throughout 1970, according to Allen, there were numerous complaints about the high price of Chevron in comparison with other gasolines. Complaints about misleading F-310 advertising, he says, were much fewer in number, even after the Federal Trade Commission announcement in September.

Fourth, and probably most important, are the data from San Francisco. Both Fenton and Allen agree that Chevron fared much better in the Bay Area than it did in Southern California. And the price wars in the Bay Area were much milder and shorter. In San Francisco County itself, there were no price wars at all–and in San Francisco Chevron's share of the market was appreciably higher in 1970 than in 1969. "In San Francisco," admits Fenton, "the F-310 campaign was a success."

It is probably true, as Fenton argues, that both unfavorable publicity and competitive advertising were milder in San Francisco than in Los Angeles. But they were hardly mild by conventional standards. In 1970, the San Francisco *Chronicle* alone published 63 column inches of critical news about F-310, including a 13-inch front-page story on the FTC charges. It published literally hundreds of column inches of critical competitive advertising.

In San Francisco, at least, the advertising campaign for F-310 was effective despite a considerable amount of unfavorable news and competitive advertising. Conceivably the news and advertising in the Los

Angeles area were sufficiently different from San Francisco to render the F-310 campaign ineffective in Southern California. (If so, then the news and advertising in the Los Angeles area were sufficiently unusual to render them inappropriate for use as a case study. One can hardly expect news coverage of the environmental implications of products and advertisements to be more critical than San Francisco coverage of F-310.) But a more likely explanation for the Southern California results is the unique price differential that prevailed in that part of the state. The question could be answered with greater certainty by using F-310 sales figures by the month and by the city—correlated with prices, news coverage, and competitive advertising. Such an analysis has apparently not been attempted by Socal, and the data are of course confidential.

As Claude I. Allen put it: "The F-310 campaign was an absolute success. It was our pricing strategy that failed."

In an effort to gain further insight into the effects and effectiveness of the F-310 advertising campaign, a telephone survey of Bay Area residents was conducted in April and May of 1971.[36] A telephone book sample of 200 homes in Palo Alto, California, was selected by choosing the last residence on each of the first 200 pages of the Palo Alto directory. A similar sample of 200 San Jose residents was selected in the same manner. Telephone numbers which produced no response after four calls were dropped without replacement. Any person who answered the telephone, if not obviously a child, was accepted as a respondent.

Refusals and incompleted interviews totalled 55 in Palo Alto and 70 in San Jose. These were eliminated from the survey, leaving a total sample of 275 respondents—145 from Palo Alto and 130 from San Jose. Of these, 168 were women, 107 were men.

The communities of Palo Alto and San Jose were chosen for the survey on the grounds that they are, respectively, the wealthiest and the poorest cities in the San Francisco Bay Area. It was assumed that other Bay Area communities would fall somewhere between these two in their responses. In fact, the two cities differed significantly on only one item: Palo Alto residents were exposed to news of phosphate detergent content in significantly more media than San Jose residents ($p < .05$). The San Jose sample, however, was presumably biased by the absence of those without telephones and those incapable of conversing in English. It is probable, therefore, that the composite data are a reasonably accurate reflection of the entire Bay Area.

After the interviewer identified himself, he explained to the respondents that the survey was concerned with "specific products that are advertised in the mass media." He emphasized that he was not connected in any way with any manufacturer or retailer. A series of 18 questions followed this introduction. The first 12 were devoted to media exposure, content recall, and attitudes about F-310. The remaining six questions had to do with exposure, recall, and attitudes about low-phosphate detergents. These data will be reported later in the chapter.

Respondents were first asked if they had ever heard of F-310 and if they knew what it was. A total of 81.5 percent correctly identified it as a gasoline product; only 18.5 percent were unable to do so. The interviewer then informed all respondents that it was, in fact, "a substance that's added to certain gasolines," and asked if they knew which brand. An extraordinary 64.0 percent named Chevron. The data were even more impressive for male respondents. Ninety percent of the men, versus 76 percent of the women, knew F-310 was a gasoline additive ($p < .01$). Eighty percent of the men, versus 54 percent of the women, correctly identified the brand as Chevron ($p < .001$). If nothing else, the F-310 campaign (perhaps aided by the news) had clearly established the existence of the additive and its identification with the brand.

The third question was designed to provide an indirect measure of the relative contributions of advertising and news to this unusually high name recognition. Respondents were asked: "If you had to name a famous man or a branch of the federal government that had something to do with F-310, whom or what agency would you pick?" It was hypothesized that those whose knowledge of F-310 was based primarily on the news would tend to name the Federal Trade Commission, while those who recalled principally the advertising would tend to name astronaut Scott Carpenter. In a follow-up question, respondents were told: "Actually, it's been associated with both the Federal Trade Commission and astronaut Scott Carpenter. Do either, or both, of these sound familiar?" The percentage responses to the two questions are tabulated below.

	Free Choice	Forced Choice
Don't know/neither	61.1	16.7
FTC	2.9	2.2
Carpenter	26.2	53.8
FTC and Carpenter	–	27.3
Other	9.8	–
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Without prompting, only 2.9 percent of the respondents identified the Federal Trade Commission with F-310, while 26.2 percent picked Carpenter. Asked to choose between the two, 29.5 percent named either the FTC or both; 81.1 percent named either Carpenter or both. Clearly Scott Carpenter (the hero of most F-310 ads) was much more indelibly impressed on the minds of respondents than was the Federal Trade Commission (the source of the most damaging F-310 news). It seems fair to infer that the ads probably had more effect than the news on the respondents' attitudes toward F-310.

For both the free-choice and the prompted question, the ability to associate *some* person or government agency with F-310 was positively correlated with name and brand recognition ($p < .001$ in all four cases). When the "don't know" responses were eliminated, however, all four relationships proved insignificant ($p > .10$).

The four questions that followed had to do with exposure to F-310 advertising in various media, recall or F-310 advertising themes, exposure to F-310 news in various media, and recall of F-310 news themes. It will help to consider the two exposure questions first. The percentage of respondents claiming exposure to F-310 advertising and news in each medium is tabulated below.

Medium	F-310 Advertising	F-310 News
Television	84.7	10.2
Radio	32.4	5.8
Newspapers	44.4	28.0
Magazines	44.0	12.7
Billboards	40.0	–
Other–primarily brochures and handouts	2.2	4.0

Television was by far the most popular medium for F-310 advertising, followed by newspapers, magazines, and billboards. Newspapers were the best medium for F-310 news, followed by magazines and television. For every medium listed, considerably more respondents were exposed to F-310 advertising than to F-310 news.

An alternate arrangement of the same data is in terms of the number of media in which each respondent claims exposure to F-310 news and advertising. The percentage responses are tabulated below.

No. of Media	F-310 Advertising	F-310 News
None	6.2	55.6
One	21.1	29.8
Two	24.7	12.7
Three	23.3	1.5
Four	16.7	0.4
Five	7.6	0.0
Six	0.4	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

The modal respondent was exposed to F-310 advertising in two media, F-310 news in none. Nearly half of the respondents were exposed to F-310 advertising in three or more media; only two percent of the respondents were exposed to F-310 news in three or more media. Clearly, then, exposure to F-310 advertising was far greater than exposure to F-310 news.

One would expect from these data that the respondents would recall more content from F-310 advertising than from F-310 news. This turns out to be the case. Only 14.2 percent of the respondents were unable to mention a single codeable theme from F-310 advertising. By contrast, 60.7 percent of the respondents could recall no content from F-310 news. Both figures include those respondents who claimed no exposure. The vast majority of those who claimed exposure to F-310 advertising or news in at least one medium were able to recall at least one theme.

More interesting is the breakdown of specific themes. The percentage responses for advertising themes are tabulated below.

Theme	Percentage
Fights air pollution	73.8
Performance/mileage	13.5
Other	4.7
Don't know	14.2

Clearly the principal message of F-310 advertising–its anti-pollution effectiveness–was successfully transmitted to the vast majority of respondents. (Interestingly enough, recall of the anti-pollution theme was negatively correlated with recall of the performance/mileage theme ($p < .001$), though both were featured in early F-310 advertising and the latter was stressed in recent F-310 advertising. Respondents were encouraged to name as many themes as they wished.)

The percentage responses for news themes are tabulated below.

Theme	Percentage
Ads are misleading	32.0
FTC opposed	8.7
Other groups opposed	1.1
Limited value	8.4
Other	2.5
Don't know	60.7

The bulk of those respondents who recall anything from F-310 news recall that the ads are misleading. Many fewer respondents recall the opposition of the Federal Trade Commission or other groups. And even fewer recall the all-important charge that F-310 is of limited value in the fight against automotive air pollution. (Unlike the advertising themes, recall of the principal news themes were positive intercorrelated. Thus, those who recalled the "ads misleading" theme also tended to recall the "FTC opposed" theme ($p < .001$) and the "limited value" theme ($p < .001$).)

It is not difficult to understand the reasons for this imbalance. In their coverage of F-310, the media have consistently emphasized the issue of advertising fraudulence over all other issues. The Federal Trade Commission complaint, for example, was devoted almost entirely to the question of whether or not F-310 was as effective as its advertising claimed in the abatement of exhaust emissions. Yet news coverage of the FTC complaint concentrated almost exclusively on the relatively minor issue of rigged demonstrations. Readers and viewers clearly absorbed this emphasis.

It is quite likely, of course, that audiences think less of a product whose advertising has been exposed as fraudulent. It is also likely that respondents made little distinction between the notion of limited product value and the notion of over-stated product claims. Yet there is significance to the fact that the overwhelming majority of respondents chose to express this joint concept in terms of the latter rather than the former.

As might be expected, recall of the principal F-310 advertising themes was positively related to the number of media in which respondents were exposed to that advertising. Similarly, recall of the principal news themes was positively correlated with media exposure to the news. These relationships are tabulated below.

	Correlation	Significance
Advertising media exposure by:		
Fights air pollution	+.340	$p < .001$
Performance/mileage	+.057	insignificant
Don't know	-.392	$p < .001$
News media exposure by:		
Ads are misleading	+.733	$p < .001$
FTC opposed	+.446	$p < .001$
Limited value	+.282	$p < .001$
Don't know	-.821	$p < .001$

Equally unsurprising is the positive relationship found between exposure and theme recall on the one hand, and knowledge of F-310 on the other. Respondents who were exposed to F-310 news and F-310 advertising in more media were more likely to be able to identify F-310 and its brand ($p < .001$ for all four relationships). Those who recalled the principal news and advertising themes were also more likely to recognize F-310 as an additive and Chevron as its brand. (Significance limits ranged from .05 to .001). The "performance" advertising theme was not significantly related to either knowledge variable. Presumably because of the small n, the relationship between the "limited value" news theme and brand identification was insignificant. All other relationships in the matrix were significant at the .05 level or better.

If the choice of Scott Carpenter versus the Federal Trade Commission in association with F-310 is indicative of the effects of advertising versus news, one would expect to find media exposure and theme recall correlated with this choice. The data tended to support this hypothesis, though not unequivocally. (Of course the ability to associate *some* person or government agency with F-310 was positively correlated with both advertising and news exposure, and with recall of all the principal advertising and news themes ($p < .001$ for 12 of the 14 relationships). The "don't know" responses were eliminated from the analysis that follows.) Wherever significant relationships were obtained, they were in the predicted directions. That is, exposure to F-310 advertising and recall of advertising themes were positively correlated with the choice of Carpenter rather than the FTC, while exposure to F-310 news and recall of news themes were positively correlated with the choice of the FTC rather than (or in addition to) Carpenter. Not all the relationships, however, were significant.

In the table that follows, "A" represents the free-choice association of Carpenter or the FTC with F-310; "PA" stands for the prompted or forced choice.

Relationships	Chi-Square	df	Significance
Ad media exposure (A)	12.00	4	$p < .02$
Ad media exposure (PA)	8.01	12	insignificant
Fights pollution (A)	0.59	1	insignificant
Fights pollution (PA)	4.75	2	$p < .10$
No ad themes (A)	—	—	insignificant
No ad themes (PA)	3.59	2	insignificant
News media exposure (A)	4.44	4	insignificant
News media exposure (PA)	30.13	8	$p < .001$
Ads misleading (A)	0.05	1	insignificant
Ads misleading (PA)	19.63	2	$p < .001$
FTC opposed (A)	3.86	1	$p < .05$
FTC opposed (PA)	42.26	2	$p < .001$
No news themes (A)	1.00	1	insignificant
No news themes (PA)	22.95	2	$p < .001$

The table clearly indicates that media exposure and theme recall were better predictors of the forced-choice association than of the free-choice association. When prompted with the names of both Carpenter and the Federal Trade Commission, respondents who were familiar with F-310 advertising tended to recognize just Carpenter. Those who were familiar with F-310 tended to recognize both. Very few respondents recognized only the Federal Trade Commission.

Information-seeking in the mass media is not restricted by a choice between news and advertising; indeed, one would have great difficulty exposing himself to one without the other. It is hardly surprising, then, that those respondents who were exposed to F-310 news in more media also tended to be exposed to F-310 advertising in more media. The correlation was not high ($r = .235$), but it was significant at the .02 level of confidence.

It follows from this finding that recall of advertising and news themes should be positively related as well. And so they were. Respondents who were exposed to F-310 news in more media tended to recall the principal F-310 advertising themes. Those who were exposed to F-310 advertising in more media tended to recall the principal news themes. And those who recalled one set of themes were more likely to recall the other as well.

The first eight questions of the F-310 survey thus verified the following hypotheses:

(1) A very high percentage of Bay Area residents know that F-310 is Chevron's gasoline additive.

(2) Many more people associate F-310 with Scott Carpenter than with the Federal Trade Commission, thus demonstrating greater familiarity with F-310 advertising than with F-310 news.

(3) Many more people have been exposed to F-310 advertising than to F-310 news, and they recall the advertising themes much better than the news themes.

(4) The principal advertising theme recalled is that F-310 helps fight air pollution.

(5) The principal news theme recalled is that the advertisements are misleading. **Very few people recall the theme of limited value.**

(6) Exposure to advertising, exposure to news, recall of advertising themes, recall of new themes, and knowledge of F-310 are all positively intercorrelated.

The final four questions of the F-310 part of the survey were concerned with the respondents' attitudes toward the product. Respondents were asked first to assess (on a one-to-five scale) the value of F-310, and of gasoline additives generally, in the fight against air pollution. Then they were asked if they ever purchased Chevron gasoline, and finally if the amount of Chevron they purchased had been affected at all by F-310. The question about the value of gasoline additives generally was added to the interview schedule well after the survey was under way. Only 103 respondents, all of them from San Jose, answered this question.

Percentage responses on the anti-pollution value of F-310 are tabulated below.

Value	Percentage
Useless	11.3
Almost useless	13.1
Slightly useful	20.0
Somewhat useful	29.8
Very useful	6.2
Don't know	19.6
TOTAL	100.0

The attitude of the Federal Trade Commission toward F-310 might best be labeled "almost useless." The modal respondent was much more enthusiastic about the additive, preferring the description "somewhat useful."

Exposure to F-310 advertising and recall of advertising themes were not significantly correlated with these value ratings. (Advertising exposure and ad theme recall were, however, positively correlated with the possession of *some* opinion on the value of F-310, as were name recognition and the free-choice association. When the "don't know" respondents were eliminated, these relationships proved insignificant.) News exposure and news theme recall, however, did produce significant correlations. Respondents who were exposed to F-310 news in more media were likely to consider the additive less valuable ($p < .10$). So were those who recalled the "ads misleading" theme ($p < .001$). Indeed, respondents who recalled *any* theme from F-310 news were likely to consider the additive less valuable than those who recalled no theme at all ($p < .001$).

Apparently news coverage of F-310 was sufficient to lower significantly the audience's opinion of the additive—but only for the minority of respondents who were exposed to the news and remembered its content. The bulk of the respondents were evidently exposed to enough F-310 advertising to absorb a considerably higher opinion of the additive than was justified by the news. Further exposure to even more advertising did not significantly elevate that opinion.

The second F-310 attitude question was phrased as follows: "After hearing about F-310 and other gasoline improvements designed to combat air pollution, do you think the danger of air pollution caused by automobiles is any less critical than it used to be?" The percentage responses are tabulated below.

Air Pollution Is	Percentage
More of a problem than ever	25.3
As big a problem as ever	51.2
A little less of a problem	15.6
A lot less of a problem	1.0
Just about solved	0.0
Don't know	6.9
TOTAL	100.0

More than half of the respondents felt that gasoline additives had had no effect on automotive air pollution. More than a quarter felt the problem was worse than ever. Only one respondent indicated that gasoline additives had made a major contribution to pollution control. Respondents who were exposed to F-310 news in more media, and those who recalled the "ads misleading" theme from F-310 news, were likely to have a lower opinion of the contribution of gasoline additives generally ($p < .10$ for both relationships). If these data are valid, then apparently the F-310 campaign has not significantly diminished public awareness of the problem of automotive air pollution.[37]

Finally, respondents were asked about their use of Chevron gasoline, and the effect of F-310 on their gasoline purchases. Fully 44.4 percent of the respondents indicated that they occasionally purchased Chevron gasoline; 45.1 percent said they did not, and 10.5 percent (mostly women) were unable to say. These figures would presumably be very pleasing to Socal executives.

On the other hand, 93.8 percent of the respondents indicated that F-310 had had no effect on their Chevron purchases. Only 4.7 percent (13 respondents) claimed that they now buy more Chevron because of F-310—and 1.5 percent (four respondents) noted that because of F-310 they now buy *less* Chevron than before.

It is a truism of advertising research, of course, that people are suspicious of advertising and reluctant to admit (even to themselves) that they have been persuaded and influenced by it.[38] This need not mean that they are not, in fact, persuaded and influenced. As William F. Fore has put it: "Even though we know we are being taken, we are being taken."[39] It is quite possible that the respondents were more affected by the F-310 advertising campaign than they were willing or able to admit. And in a market as large as gasoline, even a 3.2 percent increase in sales (4.7 percent minus 1.5 percent) may be a significant boon.

Too few respondents admitted changing their buying patterns as a result of F-310 to permit significant cross-tabulations with other variables. As for the buying patterns themselves, those who thought F-310 was more valuable in the fight against air pollution were more likely to buy it ($p < .01$). There were no other significant relationships. Exposure to advertising, recall of advertising and news themes, and knowledge of F-310 were all positively correlated with the respondents' ability to say whether or not they frequently purchased Chevron–but not with the purchasing decision itself.

As a result of the last four questions, three more survey conclusions may be added to the six listed earlier:

(7) Most Bay Area residents consider F-310 much more valuable in the fight against air pollution than the news would justify, especially if they were not exposed to F-310 news or cannot recall its themes.

(8) Gasoline additive advertising has probably not persuaded most people that the problem of automotive air pollution has been significantly alleviated.

(9) Nearly half of all Bay Area residents purchase Chevron gasoline occasionally, though few are willing to admit they do so because of F-310.

It is impossible at this point to establish conclusively the effects and effectiveness of the F-310 advertising campaign. Certainly the ads succeeded in identifying F-310 as Chevron's anti-pollution additive in the minds of most consumers. Certainly they managed to convince most consumers of the value of the additive, despite unfavorable news coverage and competitive advertisements. Certainly they achieved an increase in Chevron sales, at least temporarily and at least in those areas not beset by price wars.

The survey produced no evidence that the F-310 campaign had any effect whatever on the sense of public urgency about automotive air pollution. Such an effect would seem to follow logically from the data. If people are convinced that Socal is a responsible company and F-310 is a major improvement, they should therefore be less concerned about the environmental impact of the automobile. Perhaps other events cancelled out this effect, or perhaps it was felt only unconsciously. In any case, the survey failed completely to establish the point.

The commercial effectiveness of the F-310 advertising campaign is reasonably clear. Its environmental effects, if any, remain undemonstrated.

If even the F-310 campaign was successful, one would expect to find that the low-phosphate detergent campaign was much more successful. F-310, after all, was troubled by unfavorable news publicity and directly competitive advertising. Low-phosphate detergents, on the other hand, had the best of publicity. And competing ads (for high-phosphate detergents) carefully avoided all mention of the word "phosphates."

The San Francisco *Chronicle*, for example, ran 231 column inches of news and editorials on the subject of detergent phosphates in 1970. Twice the paper published lists of the phosphate content of each major brand. Three times it published announcements of a new phosphate-free product. Never once did it publish a story on the lessened cleaning ability of phosphate-free detergents, on the potential danger of phosphate substitutes such as NTA, or on the possibility that phosphates may not be the major cause of detergent pollution. For manufacturers of low-phosphate detergents, news coverage in the *Chronicle* could not have been better.

Detergent advertising is of course concentrated in the broadcast media. Yet in the single month of

April 1970, the *Chronicle* ran 7,548 agate lines of detergent advertising, in addition to supermarket ads that included detergents.[40] Only one ad for a high-phosphate detergent explicitly disputed the environmental importance of phosphates. The rest ignored the issue.

The *Chronicle* sample also included two advertisements from manufacturers of phosphate-free detergents–Amway and Purex. Both were naturally based on environmental appeals. Other low-phosphate or phosphate-free manufacturers that have advertised in the Bay Area include Sears, Montgomery-Ward, Shaklee, North American Chemical (Ecolo-G), and Clearwater.

The advertising budgets of these manufacturers are unknown. They tend to be small, if only because most of the companies themselves are small. Certainly they are miniscule in comparison with the advertising budgets of the major manufacturers of high-phosphate detergents. (The big three–Procter & Gamble, Lever Brothers, and Colgate-Palmolive–all have low-phosphate products of their own. The environment is not, however, a major theme in their advertising for these products.) Procter & Gamble alone spent $275 million on advertising in 1969.[41] By contrast, the most heavily advertised phosphate-free detergent in 1970 was Triumph. Armour-Dial spent $8 million advertising the product[42]–none of it in the San Francisco Bay Area. Most phosphate-free detergents are local, and subsist on advertising budgets of well under a million dollars a year.

The inability to advertise heavily is of course an important liability for phosphate-free detergent manufacturers. As President John Mayerik of Clearwater Products puts it: "You'd have a tough time selling $5 bills for $1.49 if you didn't advertise."[43] But favorable news coverage makes the problem a lot less severe than it would otherwise be. When *Chronicle* columnist Terrence O'Flaherty tried to interview Charles Pfister of Bestline Products in San Jose, he found that Pfister was on his way to give speeches before the Sierra Club, the Grange, and the Boy Scouts. In answer to O'Flaherty's question about the possibility of phosphate-free soap operas in the near future, Pfister insisted: "With young people on our side, who needs television?"[44]

Survey results appear to bear out Pfister's conclusion. Although respondents were exposed to considerably less phosphate-free detergent advertising than F-310 advertising, their exposure to phosphate news was much greater than their exposure to F-310 news. The combined effects of advertising and congruent news yielded an almost incredible level of attitude and behavior change.

In the phosphate segment of the survey, rspondents were not prompted with the name of each medium in turn, but were encouraged instead to supply their own list of media. Phosphate exposure is therefore likely to be underestimated in comparison with F-310 exposure. The percentage of respondents claiming exposure to phosphate-related news and advertising in each medium is tabulated below.

Medium	Phosphate Ads	Phosphate News
Television	37.5	16.7
Radio	5.5	5.5
Newspapers	7.6	31.6
Magazines	9.1	22.5
Brochures and other	21.8	8.7

A reorganization of these data in terms of the number of media in which each respondent was exposed to phosphate advertising and phosphate news yields the following percentages:

Number of Media	Phosphate Ads	Phosphate News
None	35.4	34.9
One	50.5	48.0
Two	11.6	14.2
Three	2.5	2.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

The principal media for phosphate-related advertising were television and brochures. The principal media for phosphate news were newspapers and magazines. Overall, exposure to news and exposure to advertising were roughly equal—much higher than exposure to F-310 news, much lower than exposure to F-310 advertising.

What sort of knowledge about phosphates resulted from this exposure? When respondents were asked to explain in their own words "the argument against phosphates," only 23.6 percent were unable to do so. Fully 13.8 percent were aware that eutrophication or overgrowth of algae was the problem. An additional 43.3 percent knew that water pollution was involved, and 19.3 percent could say only that phosphates were an environmental problem. This is a satisfactorily high level of understanding for a lay public.

Not surprisingly, advertising and news exposure were both positively correlated with knowledge about phosphates. Respondents who were exposed to phosphate-related advertising in more media were likely to know more about the problem ($r = .350$; $p < .001$), as were respondents who were exposed to phosphate news in more media ($r = .384$; $p < .001$). Exposure to phosphate-related advertising and exposure to phosphate news were also positively correlated ($r = .204$; $p < .01$), but neither was as good a predictor of the other as both were of knowledge about phosphates.

When asked about the phosphate content of their current detergent, 54.5 percent of the respondents were unable to say. Only 4.0 percent said their current brand was high in phosphates; an additional 4.7 percent said it was about average. The rest of the sample, 36.8 percent, indicated that they were currently using a low-phosphate or phosphate-free detergent. Respondents who knew more about the phosphate issue were more likely to know that their current brand was low in phosphates ($p < .001$). Exposure to phosphate-related advertising and phosphate news were also excellent predictor of current brand use ($p < .001$ for both relationships).

The most startling data from the phosphate part of the survey came in response to the following question: "Have you ever changed detergent brands or thought about changing brands because of the phosphate question?" Less than half of the respondents, 42.6 percent, said no. An additional 22.9 percent indicated that they had given some consideration to changing brands. And an astounding 34.5 percent claimed that they had already done so. Over one-third of the respondents, in other words, stated that because of the phosphate question they had switched to a different brand of detergent. Women were of course more likely than men to know if they had changed detergent brands ($p < .01$). Forty percent of the female respondents said they had changed brands because of phosphates; an additional 24 percent had thought about it.

As might be expected, those respondents who knew most about the phosphate problem were most likely to have changed brands because of phosphates ($p < .001$). Exposure to phosphate-related advertising was positively correlated with brand-switching ($p < .01$), as was exposure to phosphate news ($p < .001$).

And of course those respondents currently using low-phosphate or phosphate-free detergents were most likely to have changed brands ($p < .001$).

Four important conclusions may be drawn from the phosphate part of the survey:

(1) Most Bay Area residents were exposed to roughly equal amounts of phosphate-related advertising and phosphate news, a level of exposure midway between F-310 advertising and F-310 news.

(2) As a result of both the news and the advertising, most people are well informed on the issue of phosphate pollution.

(3) More than a third of Bay Area residents have changed detergents because of phosphates and are now using low-phosphate or phosphate-free brands.

(4) Exposure to advertising and news, knowledge about phosphate pollution, and brand-switching to a low-phosphate detergent are all positively intercorrelated.[57]

Numerous correlations were also found between these items and various questions in the F-310 part of the survey. In particular, knowledge about phosphates was positively correlated with knowledge about F 310, exposure to F-310 news and advertising, and recall of F-310 news and advertising themes. Exposure to phosphate news and advertising was positively correlated with exposure to F-310 news and advertising, knowledge of F-310, and recall of news and advertising themes. Respondents who knew more about phosphates and had changed detergents were less likely to consider F-310 valuable in the fight against air pollution.

When news and advertising are consonant, then, their combined effect is likely to be enormous. Unlike the F-310 campaign, the low-phosphate detergent campaign had no contradictory content to contend with. Very few news stories dealt with the limited cleaning power of low-phosphate detergents, the potential dangers of alternatives to phosphates, or the possibility that phosphates might not be the real villains in detergent pollution. (George Dusheck's story on KQED (see Chapter Four) discussed all of these themes; more typically, the *Chronicle* discussed none.) Very few competitive advertisements raised these issues either. Manufacturers of low-phosphate and phosphate-free detergents were free to claim the environmental superiority of their products without contradiction. Their claims were abetted by the news and opposed by no one—and they were extremely successful.

Sales figures for the detergent industry are hard to come by. The major manufacturers publish annual totals, but no brand-by-brand breakdowns. And the minor manufacturers, for the most part, publish nothing at all.

The figures that are available, however, seem to indicate a rosy future for the phosphate-free detergent business. The gross sales of Shaklee Products, for example, doubled in 1970.[45] In a three-month period in mid-1970, sales of Instant Fels increased by 50 to 75 percent.[46] And in its first year of existence, Ecolo-G posted $45 million in retail sales[47]—despite a much-publicized Federal Trade commission order suspending distribution for several months because the product label failed to admit Ecolo-G was highly caustic and potentially dangerous.

Like most supermarket chains (especially in the Bay Area) Safeway Stores has recently begun stocking and pushing a complete line of phosphate-free detergents and soaps, including its own house brand, Par. According to Donald Rogers, a buyer for Safeway, this is a purely commercial decision. "We stock them because they sell," he says. "They are what the consumer wants now."[48]

In March 1971, the Soap & Detergent Association estimated that phosphate-free products accounted for two to three percent of the market. *Marketing/Communications* magazine added that "this estimate, while significant in itself, is held to be conservative by most non-phosphate marketers." The magazine's own estimates were in the area of five percent, and it quoted with apparent approval predictions of up to ten percent by the end of 1971.[49]

These are national estimates. In areas of greater-than-average public concern about water pollution, the figures are presumably somewhat higher. In areas where municipal governments have outlawed high-phosphate detergents (or even considered outlawing them), the figures are probably higher still. And in areas that have served as test markets for several phosphate-free detergent advertising campaigns, the figures are likely to be highest of all.

So far, the major detergent manufacturers have not responded to the phosphate-free boom. Aside from a brief institutional campaign from Procter & Gamble in 1970, their advertising has simply ignored environmental considerations. (In February of 1970, Colgate-Palmolive did run a series of environmental ads for Axion, featuring Arthur Godfrey's assertion that Axion was trying to stop its contribution to water pollution. The ads were run at Godfrey's insistence, after he publicly denounced his own earlier Axion ads on environmental grounds.) According to G. R. Snider, Jr., of the P&G public relations department, "Procter & Gamble does not use environmental appeals in an attempt to sell its products–primarily because these too often represent an attempt to trade in a false manner on emotional issues."[50] All three of the leading detergent manufacturers have reduced the phosphate content of at least some of their brands, but none has made this a major advertising theme.

Synthetic detergent sales hit an all-time high in 1970.[51] Secure in their profits, the major manufacturers are apparently content to let smaller companies battle for the relatively small phosphate-free market.

According to industry experts, any of three developments could alter this stance: (1) If phosphate-free detergents ever captured as much as 15 percent of the market; (2) If any single company captured enough of the phosphate-free market to liberate extensive sums for advertising and promotion; (3) If the federal government or a significant number of state and local governments began regulating phosphate content. All three contingencies are quite possible. Most industry spokesmen appear confident that it is only a matter of time until the Big Three introduce and advertise their own phosphate-free detergents.[52]

Already the major manufacturers are beginning to sound somewhat defensive about their phosphate-free competitors. Consider for example the following lead paragraphs from an article in *Detergents and Specialties,* the principal industry trade journal:

> Like wooden soldiers coming from a toy maker's factory, non-phosphate, non-NTA, no-enzyme, biodegradable and "non-polluting" detergents are coming on the market.
>
> The advertising for these products is much the same. They all say that they will not pollute, will make your clothes as white as any phosphate-content brand but they never explain to the consumer just what they have to back up these claims.[53]

In an earlier editorial, the same magazine noted:

> When requested to do so by *D&S* these firms have not shown us evidence to support their cleaning claims, have not divulged the builder systems, have produced no data as to the effect their products might have on the environment. . . .

> The most recent case to come to our attention is a full-page newspaper advertisement which boasts that it is presenting some "plain facts" about detergents. We have read every word of the ad several times. We are unable to discern any "plain facts" but we have discovered numerous statements and comments that seem to us to be highly doubtful, if not misleading. . . .
>
> The industry as a whole will surely suffer if false, unsupportable claims are made, that will ultimately be to the detriment of not only the few opportunistic companies making them, but the reputable members of the industry as well.[54]

However shrilly expressed, the complaint is not without justice. Many phosphate-free detergents still contain NTA, a phosphate substitute which the major manufacturers abandoned at government request when it was shown to cause birth defects in laboratory animals. Others contain sodium metasilicate, a caustic alkali dangerous to skin as well as fabrics. Still others contain nitrates, which some experts believe are greater contributers to eutrophication than phosphates. Many are priced far in excess of the value of their ingredients, and do an inadequate cleaning job as well.

As the government and the news media begin to pay attention to these drawbacks, the marketing success of phosphate-free detergents may suffer a setback. In the interim, they are selling very well, and their sales are undoubtedly being watched very carefully indeed by the major manufacturers.

It was hypothesized at the start of this discussion that if an environmental advertising campaign could possibly succeed, the low-phosphate detergent campaign should succeed. It is succeeding. It was further hypothesized that if an environmental advertising campaign could possibly fail, the F-310 campaign should fail. It succeeded too, though not unequivocally.

Two conclusions seem justified: (1) Especially when aided by congruent news content, environmental advertising is an enormously effective selling device; (2) Even when hampered by discrepant news content, environmental advertising is a somewhat effective selling device.

For those who expose themselves to it, critical news coverage is apparently very successful at destroying the persuasive power of an advertising campaign. An alternative explanation may be that those who already disbelieve an advertising message are more likely to expose themselves to news content critical of the ad, and more likely to recall such content. But even a story as well-covered as F-310 attracted the attention of only a small minority of the public. Exposure to a high-powered advertising blitz, on the other hand, is nearly universal. The undesirable social effects of environmental advertising would undoubtedly be significantly alleviated by a serious and sustained news effort. But even a vast improvement in news coverage will not solve the problem entirely.

A more direct solution is needed. Advertising censorship remains the only viable alternative.

Advertising Acceptance: Standards and Procedures

The reasons why a particular mass medium rejects a particular advertisement are often muddled, unclear, and inexplicit. Nonetheless, the following list of eight prototypic reasons will prove helpful in an overview of advertising acceptance standards and procedures:

(1) Because the advertisement is illegal. The fear of government regulation is ever-present in the minds of broadcasters. Actual government regulations are scrupulously followed by all three media.

(2) Because the advertisement is in violation of a professional code to which the medium subscribes. This is the principal reason why local broadcasters reject ads. Though they make use of Better Business Bureau guidelines, newspapers and magazines have few professional codes to rely on.

(3) Because the advertisement is indecent or in poor taste. Because tasteless ads are thought most likely to produce criticism, broadcasters are ever-vigilant about matters of taste. Except for certain product categories (notably movie ads), newspapers and magazines are less concerned about taste.

(4) Because the advertisement is likely to offend specific minorities or pressure groups. The thought of offending anyone frightens broadcasters, and influences their advertising policy tremendously. Newspapers and magazines are less concerned about offensiveness.

(5) Because the advertisement is dishonest, inconsistent, fraudulent, or otherwise misleading. Newspapers tend to be extremely scrupulous about ads that are misleading on their face. Magazines and broadcasting are considerably laxer.

(6) Because the advertisement fails to give an accurate or complete impression of the product or service advertised. Except for certain magazines, none of the three media requires itself to investigate the validity of claims. But all (especially newspapers and broadcasting) make exceptions for product categories that have caused problems in the past.

(7) Because the advertisement is inconsistent with the function, intent, or image of the medium. Magazines reject ads primarily for this reason. Newspapers and broadcasting seldom consider it.

(8) Because the advertisement is socially undesirable. Newspapers consider this standard primarily for political ads. Broadcasting considers it when required to do so by government or public pressure. Magazines seldom consider it at all.

How many advertisements, and what advertisements, are rejected for each of the eight reasons, and how is this distribution affected by philosophical and procedural considerations? To discover how media patterns of advertising acceptance influence the acceptability of environmental advertising, it will help to run through the eight criteria in order.

First, environment ads are legal. There exists no law or local ordinance currently in force that speaks directly to the environmental impact of advertising. (A bill, S.927, proposing criminal sanctions for misleading environmental advertising was introduced by Sen. William B. Spong Jr. in February 1971. The bill would apply only to exaggerated claims of the traditional "truth in advertising" sort. Though the criminal penalties are novel–and disturbing to the media, which have opposed the bill–the limited scope of the measure makes it unlikely to effect a significant change, even if passed.)

Second, environmental ads do not violate professional codes. The only NAB Code interpretation that deals even remotely with the environment is the one entitled "Insecticides." It is devoted entirely to questions of health, especially the health of children and pets.

Third, environmental ads are in good taste. Despite the label "eco-pornography," there is not a single ad discussed earlier that could be called tasteless in the usual sense of that word.

Fourth, environmental ads are not offensive to any pressure group powerful enough to effect a change in media standards. As previously noted, this may be because environmentalists are over-fatalistic about the chances of success.[55]

Fifth, environmental ads are seldom dishonest or misleading on their face. Because environmental issues are technically complex, the validity of environmental claims can rarely be assessed merely by examining the ads themselves.

Sixth, environmental ads *are* likely to fail to give an accurate impression of the product or service advertised, especially of the environmental impact of that product or service. However, they do not constitute a category that the media customarily investigate for accuracy.[56]

Seventh, environmental ads are not inconsistent with the public image or self-image of any of the mass media, with the sole exception of a small number of environment-oriented magazines.[57]

Eighth, environmental ads *are* (in the opinion of this researcher) socially undesirable in many cases. However, the media show no signs of agreement, at least not to the extent of assigning them to this seldom-used category.

There are, in short, two potential reasons for rejecting environmental advertisements–inaccuracy (no. 6) and social desirability (no. 8). The media seem disinclined to use either one. A look at local standards and procedures may help to explain why.

The advertising or continuity acceptance departments of 36 newspapers and 16 broadcast stations in the San Francisco Bay Area were telephoned, and respondents asked for a copy of their advertising acceptance standards. In the vast majority of cases where no such written document existed, respondents were asked to describe briefly, in their own words, their acceptance standards and procedures. All interviews were conducted in the months of June and July 1971.

The responses were remarkably homogeneous. Newspaper respondents indicated that questionable ads were referred to the advertising manager, who (sometimes with the aid of a committee) made the final decision. Though misleading ads were the principal source of difficulty, few papers had specific policies to deal with them; as a rule the advertising managers based their judgments entirely on common sense and experience. Policies were far more common in the areas of erotic and suggestive advertising (14 papers) and political advertising (11 papers). In addition, two respondents mentioned special policies on palm-readers and spiritualists; two mentioned cigarettes; and one each mentioned alcohol, land developments, hemorrhoid remedies, and gambling.

Of the 16 broadcast respondents, 12 indicated that their advertising acceptance standards were more or less identical with those of the NAB Codes. Policies were likely to be stricter or more detailed than the Codes only in the areas of erotic advertising (six stations), tasteless advertising (five stations), political advertising (three stations), and advertising volume (three stations). In addition, two respondents commented that they took special care with drug advertising, while one each mentioned the following categories: alcohol, land deals, lotteries, news simulation, and misleading advertising. In all cases a continuity director was in charge of previewing the ads, with questionable ones often referred to the general manager for final disposition.[58]

Several other points of interest emerged from this informal survey:

(1) Reliance on sources of information aside from the ads themselves was minimal. Only one respondent specifically mentioned the Better Business Bureau, while several volunteered that "common sense" was their only guide. Respondents cheerfully admitted their willingness to carry ads for products whose dangers or defects were exposed in their news columns or even their editorials.

(2) Distrust of the government was widespread. Many respondents indicated their opposition to government regulation of advertising, though predicting its increase. Several volunteered their disinclination to use government opposition to an ad (as in the case of F-310) as even a contributing factor in their acceptance decision.

(3) Economic considerations were paramount. Several small newspapers and radio stations admitted that they accepted ads they would prefer to reject because they needed the revenue. Alcohol was the most frequently mentioned example.

(4) Advertising rejection was confined almost entirely to local ads. Several newspapers indicated that any ad acceptable to their national ad agency was acceptable to them. Broadcast stations left the acceptance of national advertising to the Code Authority, the network, the chain, or the agency.

(5) Political advertising produced the greatest diversity (and specificity) of standards. Policies ranged from outright bans through timing and labeling requirements total acceptance. Many respondents referred all political ads to their legal departments.[59]

Only two respondents mentioned environmental advertising during the course of the interviews. Television station KRON indicated that as a result of government scrutiny it now pays careful attention to oil company claims for gasoline additives–though no ads have yet been rejected on these grounds. And the Contra Costa *Times and Green Sheet* boasted that it was the only newspaper in the country with a special "environmental editor," whose job it was to solicit, write, and censor environmental advertisements. His goal, he said, is to "help local companies present their environmental message in a way that will be effective and credible to the public." With his help, the *Times and Green Sheet* published a 68-page environmental supplement on June 27, 1971.

In an effort to gain greater insight into advertising acceptance policies, procedures, and philosophies, representatives of five local media were interviewed in depth.

1. The San Francisco *Examiner.*[60] Charles L. Gould, publisher of the San Francisco *Examiner*, is also the newspaper's principal advertising censor. In the early 1960s, the *Examiner* had a full-time ad acceptance person, but the job disappeared when the paper organized a joint operating agreement with the morning San Francisco *Chronicle.* Today the San Francisco Newspaper Printing Company solicits ads for both papers, and refers questionable ones directly to the two publishers.

The *Examiner* is well-known locally for its strict censorship of "pornographic" entertainment and movie ads. In 1965 the paper began evolving a complex code for movie copy and illustrations. "We dry-cleaned the ads until they were acceptable," explains Gould. "But I began to worry that this was a form of entrapment. The ads were clean, so readers attended the movies, which were by no means clean." In 1970, therefore, the paper revamped its strategy. Certain movie theaters were identified as "wholesale grind houses," and all advertisements from those theaters were rejected–regardless of the tastefulness of any particular ad.

Gould is ambivalent about the reasons for that decision. On the one hand, he stresses that "our readers concur in our judgment of pornography." In the other hand, he maintains that he would have rejected the ads in any case. As an *Examiner* editorial put it:

> [In the past we] grudgingly accepted the decision of the Supreme Court that "community standards" should determine what is obscene and what is not.
>
> After witnessing the results of this decision, we are now convinced that community

> standards do not determine what is pornography. Quite the contrary. We believe the results in San Francisco are proof positive that proliferating pornography creates debased community standards. . . .
>
> We should have thrown this ugliness out of our advertising columns long ago.[61]

Yet Gould is reluctant to impose his own standards on his readers. Though he was willing to do so in the case of pornography, he points out that "we do accept ads for 'peace' marches, even though they are destructive, divisive, and socially damaging. They have a right to be heard."

Besides pornography, the *Examiner* flatly rejects or carefully screens the following ad categories: dating bureaus, massage parlors, political ads, help-wanted ads for models or waitresses, hypnotists, homosexual groups, lonely hearts clubs, and guns. Because the *Examiner* has no time to investigate individual advertisers, most of these restrictions are categorical. They are designed to protect readers from danger, entrapment, and bad taste.

Like most newspapers, the *Examiner* is also concerned about misleading advertising. It is especially careful about land developments, investment ads, and mail-order ads, all of which are routinely checked out with the Better Business Bureau and other sources. Employment agencies and home rental agencies are also carefully watched, because the paper has had trouble with them in the past. Retail ads that seem misleading on their face are often referred to Gould, who may demand alterations. He cites as a typical case a camera advertisement that featured three expensive lenses in a photograph, though the copy admitted that the lenses were not included in the sale price.

The only environment-related ad that Gould can recall ever rejecting was a "Save the Seals" appeal that he believed (on the advice of the Police Department) to be a swindle. To the best of his memory, he has never rejected any ad on environmental grounds.

This is in part a reflection of Gould's own untroubled environmental attitudes; he claims he has never seen an ad in any publication that he thought was environmentally irresponsible. But it is also a reflection of *Examiner* procedures. The Newspaper Printing Company rejects an average of six ads a week on standing instructions from Gould. It refers to him an additional one to five ads a week. A few of these are misleading on their face; most are in categories that have been flagged for special attention because of potential fraud or offensiveness. An ad that is superficially honest and not in a special category has no chance whatever of reaching Gould's desk prior to publication.

The *Examiner*, Gould maintains, "has refused hundreds of thousands of dollars in questionable advertising." But many questions–including all those that are the topic of this dissertation–are never asked.

2. The Palo Alto *Times*.[62] Advertising censorship at the Palo Alto *Times* is divided into three parts. Certain ad classifications are forbidden or restricted as a matter of management policy. Questions of taste in advertising are adjudicated by the editor. And matters of business ethics are decided by the Display Advertising Director, Howard Schonberger.

Ads that are rejected by the *Times* "policy book" include alcoholic beverages; fortune tellers, astrologers, hypnotists, and the like; race tracks and other gambling; last-minute election ads; and anonymous ads. These categories are rejected simply because the founders and principal owners of the newspaper consider them socially detrimental. In the case of alcohol–the only big-money rejection–their disapproval is supported by the nearness of Stanford University and the municipal ordinance barring liquor stores.

Schonberger diligently enforces these restrictions, but he does not agree with them. "The media shouldn't make moral decisions for the public," he says. "If a product is bad, then the government should outlaw it. If it's legal, we shouldn't censor any commodity." If he were to reject any category of ads, Schonberger maintains, he would not pick liquor; both cigarettes and automobiles (this may be facetious) are more harmful to society. For philosophical reasons, Schonberger himself does not ban any product category, though he has the authority to do so.

Taste and offensiveness are relatively minor issues at the *Times,* whose readership tends to be fairly permissive. But some movie ads have been censored, as was a water bed advertisement that contained sexual allusions.

Schonberger tends to find business-related reasons for rejecting ads that other papers might question on grounds of taste or propriety. An ad for a topless bar, for example, was rejected on the grounds that the waitresses wore "pasties" and the ad were therefore misleading. Similarly, when an anti-war group wanted to run a list of local merchants who had refused to put anti-war posters in their windows, Schonberger turned down the ad because the implication that the merchants favored the war was misleading. He would have accepted a list of those merchants who did put up the posters.

Schonberger's principal concern is misleading advertising, and in this area he depends heavily on his salesmen. "Every salesman is trained in the legal and ethical aspects of advertising," he explains. "If an advertiser wants to run something misleading, the salesman suggests that an honest ad might be more effective—and he helps the advertiser write an effective honest ad. If necessary, he refuses the dishonest one. The only ads that get to me are the borderline cases."

When necessary, Schonberger is very hard on misleading advertisers. He lobbied the city to pass a law banning "closing out sales" from stores that are not actually going out of business. When a reader calls with a complaint that Schonberger thinks is just, he may well take it to the District Attorney; he did so a few years ago and caused the failure of a local Dodge dealership. Investment ads, in particular, are carefully investigated, and cleared through the Better Business Bureau. But these are rare events. Because of the scrupulousness of his salesmen, Schonberger himself looks at no more than two or three ads a week.

Though the *Times* adheres religiously to legal and Better Business Bureau standards for ad presentation, it rarely checks into the validity of advertising claims (except for investment ads). "There's a big difference," says Schonberger, "between the scientific judgment of a product and flat-out deception in an ad. A newspaper shouldn't print deceptive ads, but it should not judge products either. We're not equipped to make that judgment in any case."

As a result of these principles, Schonberger has never censored an ad on environmental grounds, and suspects that he never will. He agrees that "cigarettes and DDT are unhealthy, and F-310 is probably next to useless." But none of that has been proved, he says. "It's enough that we print the charges and complaints in our news columns. People aren't idiots. They know what the charges are. And charges aren't proof."

Schonberger himself is not insensitive to environmental considerations. "If I had a DDT ad, I would try to persuade the advertiser to advertise something else instead." But if persuasion proved ineffective, the ad would run.

3. *Sunset Magazine.*[63] In the middle of the advertising department of *Sunset*'s Menlo Park office is a three-drawer filing cabinet labeled "Rejected Advertisements." Some 500 files are located there. Labels in the "A" section read (in chronological order): Arthur's Books, Acme Manufacturing Company, Acorn Press, Age-Less Cosmetics, All-American School, Alii Land, Ralph Allum Company, Alva Tranquil Corporation, Amaz-on, American Petroleum Institute, Andrea J. Enterprises, L. C. Antles Pollen Supplies, Arizona Prospector, Arizona Land for Sale, As You Were Associates, Atlas Sewing Centers, Atomic Development Mutual Fund, Audio Controls Corporation, Auto Guide Book, Andee Enterprises, American Institute of Antiques, Leon Auerbach Company, Adco Company, All-American Sports Camp, Anti-Tobacco Center of America, Audubon Films, A. E. Electric Corp., Allen Agency, American Image, Astrologic Systems, Alpha Northwest, and Abbott Laboratories.

According to *Sunset* Advertising Service Manager Richard R. Kitson, every one of these ads was rejected "because it did not fit the *Sunset* image." Says Kitson: "*Sunset* is a travel, building, food, and gardening magazine. We try to confine our ads to those four areas. Anything that does not complement the editorial product is rejected."

What sorts of ads fail under this standard? Liquor ads for one–though not wine ads, which are "a part of Western living." Also tobacco ads (for more than 25 years), feminine hygiene products, money-making schemes, gambling ads, and controversial books. Also underwear ads and anything that pictures the undraped female. Also investment trusts, mutual funds, and stock offerings. Also political advertising. Also (with some exceptions) health foods, internal and external medicines, real estate promotions, and contests. Also, says Kitson, any advertisement "that makes claims *Sunset* is unable to substantiate." In all, 25 percent of national magazine advertising volume consists of ads that are unacceptable to *Sunset.*

Kitson reads every advertisement before it goes into the magazine. If the ad is one of those forbidden in *Sunset*'s extensive "Policy Book," he rejects it. If the ad is tasteless, offensive, suggestive, or strident, he rejects it. If the ad includes product claims, he checks them out; and if he cannot verify the claims, he rejects it. Even if the ad is perfectly innocent but "just doesn't sound like a *Sunset* kind of ad," he rejects it. When in doubt, Kitson may appeal to a committee including the publisher, the assistant publisher, the advertising director, himself, and his assistant. But usually, when in doubt about an ad, he rejects it.

Not every magazine can afford such stringent advertising acceptance standards, as Kitson himself readily admits. And certainly, he says, most newspapers and broadcast stations cannot. "But *Sunset* is very well off, and we can afford to be picky. And it is in our long-range best interests to make sure that every ad we publish is consistent with our image as a home and family informational magazine."

In 1969, *Sunset*'s gardening emphasis began to involve the magazine in environmental issues. It editorialized against DDT and certain other chlorinated hydrocarbons, and immediately announced that it would no longer carry advertisements for products containing those substances. Kitson then began referring all pesticide ads to the gardening editor for comment. One typical response:

> I cannot state any official (i.e. as defined publicly in SUNSET) objections to the ad. But, from the position of SUNSET's integrity, I would object if we would run any of these ads. Many of the products . . . contain chlorinated hydrocarbon ingredients which we know from common sense and experience are just as capable of causing death of non-target organisms as DDT was. We just don't have the final scientific evidence yet to indict these ingredients. . .[64]

The ad was rejected.

Sunset now rejects a considerable number of ads on environmental grounds. Kitson maintains a file on the environmental impact of various products and industries, together with his files of BBB and FTC reports. He is familiar with many of the ads discussed in Chapter Two, and maintains he would have rejected most of them.

Moreover, says Kitson, "we are beginning to move from the simple question of accuracy to the much harder question of environmental effects. Last year we took a PG&E ad on nuclear power plants and a Shell ad on how clean its Richmond plant was, because our research showed that both ads had a strong base in scientific data. Today, we might well reject them anyhow. One of the items we have on the back-burner now is to look into the environmental effects of dyed paper products." And *Sunset* recently announced a policy of rejecting ads for trail bikes and snowmobiles because of their environmental impact.

According to Kitson, *Sunset*'s strong stand on the environment is partly a result of the environmental commitment of its publisher and many of its editors. "But the big reason is that so much of our editorial content deals with the environment, and so many of our readers are concerned about the environment. We try very hard to be consistent. I wouldn't expect other publications with other kinds of content to go along."

4. KPIX Television.[65] KPIX is an affiliate of the CBS network and a member of the Westinghouse chain. It is not a subscriber to the NAB Code (because Westinghouse considers the Code too lax in a number of areas), but it does obey nearly all Code provisions. Depending on its origins, then, a commercial on KPIX may have to satisfy several censors–the Code, Westinghouse, CBS, and KPIX Film and Traffic Supervisor A. Dean Lucas.

National ads begin with the Code Authority. From there, they go to CBS, which is a little stricter than the Code in a few areas, and to Westinghouse, which is a lot stricter than the Code in many areas. It is a matter of tremendous inconvenience to everyone–from the accountants to the engineers–for a local station to yank an ad off the network feed and substitute its own. But for several years all Westinghouse stations did precisely that to every cigarette ad and every Frito Bandito ad (which offended some Mexican-Americans). They are now doing the same thing to every feminine deodorant ad.

Lucas is not sure why Westinghouse is so much stricter than the rest of the broadcast industry. "In part it's because we disagree as to what the public will tolerate," he says. "We believe that it is in our long-range best interests to avoid commercials that might antagonize our viewers. But our rules are also a reflection of corporate personality. I think our top management really believes cigarettes are harmful and feminine deodorants are in bad taste."

In theory, KPIX, not CBS or Westinghouse, is responsible even for national ads. But Lucas says that neither he nor General Manager William Osterhaus has ever rejected one. "I don't even see the network ads until they are broadcast," he says.

Lucas does, however, see every local spot before broadcast, and censoring these ads is the major part of his job. But even here he is not on his own. "Most of the time I just enforce the Code and Westinghouse policy. If there's a spot I don't like that doesn't seem to be covered by those, I take it to the general manager." What sorts of ads get rejected in this fashion?

> *Illegal ads.* Lucas has a lot of trouble with lotteries and contests that border on lotteries. He is also very attuned to the truth-in-lending laws, and has rejected several ads that violated them. His files of government regulations are enormous.
>
> *Offensive ads.* Movie trailers and foundation garment ads are carefully screened. Lucas recently rejected a commercial for Kangaroo Shorts because the outline of the model's genitals was visible to the viewer.
>
> *Socially undesirable ads.* In this category Lucas puts ads that disparage competitors, mention gambling, or stress violence or fear (Lucas recently rejected a burglar alarm because it was likely to frighten children). By order of the general manager, military recruiting ads are also banned, though Lucas is not sure why.

Lucas is most on his own in the area of misleading advertising. If an ad is misleading on its face, of course, he rejects it—but according to Lucas this happens very seldom. For the most part, his concern for misleading ads is limited to product categories covered by government regulations, such as truth in lending. Besides these, he pays careful attention to land development ads, and will check out any product claim he personally finds difficult to believe. A book ad that implied an American Medical Association endorsement, for example, was referred to the AMA, while a Memorex commercial claiming its tape recorder could shatter glass was cleared with the Westinghouse office in New York. But very few ads are checked so closely. "We're not about to set up testing labs to make sure that the paint really lasts seven years," Lucas argues.

Environmental advertising is not one of the categories that gets special attention from Lucas. Corporate image ads are passed on by the network and the chain, neither of which has any policies dealing with environmental impact. As for product claims, Lucas is familiar with the environmental arguments against products like Ecolo-G (his example), but he maintains that they are not proved, and so he carries the ads.

When the Chevron F-310 campaign first began, Lucas accepted the commercials without question. Only after a variety of government agencies had criticized the ads did Lucas take action. He requested further information from the company, and eventually demanded (and received) several changes in the ads themselves.[66] "It's not my job to worry about the social or environmental effects of commercials," Lucas explains. "That's up to Westinghouse or the NAB. I wouldn't reject an environmental ad on my own initiative unless I thought it was misleading in the classic sense."

5. KSFO Radio.[67] Jack W. Riaska, Continuity Director for KSFO Radio, does not believe in rejecting commercials unless he has to. "We aren't trying to turn business down," he explains. "We're trying to get as much business as we possibly can. That's what capitalism is all about."

What sorts of commercials does Riaska feel he must reject? "Anything that might endanger our license," he says. "That includes illegal ads, of course, and also ads that violate the Code. We also reject anything that's likely to get our listeners up in arms, such as pornography." Riaska maintains that his standards are more stringent than those of most local radio stations. "Agencies submit the ads to us first. They know that if KSFO takes it, everyone will take it." Yet he averages only four or five rejected ads a year.

Riaska himself listens to every taped commercial before it is broadcast, and reads all ad copy before it goes to the disc jockeys. If he finds an ad that might be illegal (most often a lottery), he refers it to the sales manager, who may take it up with the station's attorneys. If necessary, the agency is then informed that the ad is unacceptable. Clearcut violations of the NAB Code (such as liquor ads) are returned immediately to the advertiser, with an explanation as to why they cannot be accepted. More subtle Code violations (suggestive ads, for instance) also go to the sales manager, and sometimes the station manager, for final disposition.

Aside from illegal ads and Code violations, Riaska has only one other standard to enforce. As a matter of station policy, all commercials for pornographic movies are rejected. This is a recent policy. "We got into a lot of trouble about 'The Stewardesses.' The ads were clean but the movie was filthy, and a lot of listeners objected. So now we use the movie ratings and just don't take ads for the dirty ones."

Riaska says he is always on the lookout for misleading advertising, though he seldom runs across any. Very recently, he previewed a spot for Automotive Engineering, offering brake overhauls at a bargain price of $40. The commercial began by stating that one could overhaul one's "Ford or Chevy" for this price. Later it referred to "all models." Riaska objects to this ad on the grounds that it falsely implies that $40 will cover a brake job even on a heavier automobile. He intends to refer the ad to the sales manager, and expects that some sort of alteration will be required. (At least one other local radio station, KGO, has accepted and broadcast this commercial. This researcher heard the commercial on KGO on his way to interview Mr. Riaska.)

Though careful about ads that are misleading on their face, Riaska says he almost never checks product claims. "We don't have the information to do that," he says. "And even if we did, that's not our job. Misleading ads are against the law. That's why we reject them. We're in business as a commercial venture, and we don't have to restrict ourselves to only best buys. As long as a commercial is legal and in good taste, it's okay."

Accepting all ads that can be safely and legally accepted is more than just a matter of economics for Riaska. It is a matter of principle. "I don't feel any of us has a right to say this is good for society and this is not good for society. That's authoritarian, not democratic. I run things by the book. What I personally think of the ads is irrelevant."

KSFO has carried commercials for Shell's No-Pest Strip, the Alaska pipeline, and Ecolo-G. Riaska says he is unaware of the environmental objections to these three, but "it wouldn't matter if I knew." He continues to accept advertising for F-310 without question. "That hasn't been settled yet. It's still a matter of opinion, so we take the ads."

Riaska understands his job, and he believes in it. "Some other stations, maybe, turn down ads because they disapprove of them. At KSFO, we turn down ads only because the government or our listeners disapprove of them, and we'd be in trouble if we ran them. That is how it should be in a democratic, capitalist society."

Environmental advertising is deserving of censorship on two grounds–that the ads give an inaccurate impression of the products or services advertised (by ignoring or misrepresenting their environmental impact); and that the ads are socially undesirable. Neither reason is very frequently employed by the mass media in the development and administration of advertising acceptance standards.

To the extent that the media reject advertisements only for self-interested reasons, they are unlikely to begin rejecting environmental advertisements unless public pressure or government regulation forces them to do so. Nearly all newspapers, magazines, and broadcast stations will turn down any ad that a significant percentage of their audience finds offensive. Nearly all with turn down any ad that has been declared illegal, or is in serious danger of being declared illegal. Perhaps it is inevitable that the media will follow the public and the government in this matter, instead of leading the former and remaining independent of the latter.

Undoubtedly there are many publishers and broadcasters for whom this is true. Undoubtedly there are many who would be unwilling to reject any ad they felt they could safely accept, even if convinced that the ad deserved rejection. For these individuals, public pressure and government regulation are the only answers.

But there is reason to suspect–or at least to hope–that the media's failure to reject environmental advertising is not entirely on self-interested grounds.

On the procedural level, it is far easier to check an ad for internal consistency or consistency with common sense than for consistency with reality. Many magazines go to tremendous expense to evaluate products and substantiate product claims; in certain product categories, so do a number of newspapers and broadcast stations. Many more might be inclined to do so if it were rendered less difficult and less expensive.

On the philosophical level, some publishers and broadcasters may well have conscientious objections to imposing on their audience their own judgments of the value of advertised products and the effects of advertisements. The "common carrier" view of the media holds that only in the most extreme cases should any message be denied access. Many of the most responsible media executives earnestly subscribe to this view, especially in their advertising policy.

Moreoever, most publishers and broadcasters are simply not accustomed to thinking of advertisements in terms of social desirability. Ads that are misleading, or offensive, or illegal are rejected as a matter of course, for these are labels with which all the media are familiar. But not one of the people interviewed was familiar with the concept of a socially undesirable advertisement. Only after considerable explanation did they recognize–apparently for the first time–that an ad could be accurate, tasteful, and legal, and nonetheless evil in its social effects. It was hardly surprising that they had no policies to cope with such ads.

Publishers and broadcasters, in short, do not permit themselves or have not trained themselves to think in terms of the social effects of an advertisement. They may in fact reject some ads simply because they disapprove of them, but almost invariably they find another justification for the decision. And where no such justification exists–as in the case of environmental advertising–they feel compelled to accept the ads.

There is no doubt that the media have failed to establish sufficiently stringent acceptance standards for environmental advertising. To the extent that this failure is the result of self-interest, it is subject only to pressure, not to persuasion. But to the extent that it is motivated by procedural and pholosophical considerations, it is not immutable. New procedures and new philosophies can be suggested.

Environmental Advertising and Social Responsibility

In 1968, radio station KBAY in San Jose received from a listener a complaint about a possibly misleading booklet on the profit potential of land investments. In his reply to the complaint, KBAY Station Manager R. C. Hollingsworth dealt briefly with his reasons for accepting the ad:

> Remember, it is their business to sell real estate, which is still a good investment in this state. And, remember too, *we in the advertising business are obligated to accept advertising as long as the copy meets the code of the National Association of Broadcasters.*[68] (Italics added)

Hollingsworth is not alone in this belief. Nearly all of the media personnel questioned by this researcher expressed some uncertainty about their right to reject advertising. Most felt reasonably confident with respect to ads that fell into some traditional category of advertising acceptance–misleading ads, tasteless ads, NAB Code violations, and the like. But when faced with an ad they wished to question for less conventional reasons, the majority were fearful of the legal implications of rejection.

Though apparently very common, this fear is entirely unjustified. With the exception of a single early case,[69] the courts have unanimously agreed that the media are free to reject any advertisement they wish, as long as the rejection is not the result of an illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade. At least 15 appellate courts have reached this conclusion.

A leading case in this area is *Shuck v. Carroll Daily Herald,*[70] decided by the Iowa Supreme Court in 1933. Shuck operated a cleaning and dyeing service, and claimed that in rejecting his advertisements the *Herald* was discriminating between him and his competitors. The court ruled that such discrimination was entirely legal:

> The newspaper business is an ordinary business. It is a business essentially private in nature–as private as that of the baker, grocer, or milkman, all of which perform a service on which, to a greater or less extent, the communities depend, but which bears no such relation to the public as to warrant its inclusion in the category of businesses charged with public use. . . . Thus, as a newspaper is a strictly private enterprise the publishers thereof have a right to publish whatever advertisements they desire and to refuse to publish whatever advertisements they do not wish to publish.

More recently, the owner of a local movie theater sued the Battle Creek (Michigan) *Inquirer* and *News* after both papers refused to print his ads for an "adult" movie.[71] Citing the *Shuck* decision and a number of other precedents, the court decided in favor of the publisher:

> The First Amendment to the Federal Constitution declares and safeguards the sanctity of freedom of the press. Our founding fathers recognized that well-informed citizens are essential for the preservation of democratic institutions, and toward this end, an independent press is indispensable. The public interest, therefore . . . demands that the press shall remain independent, unfettered by governmental regulations regardless of whether that regulation stems from legislative enactments or judicial decisions.

The comparison of these two decisions is instructive. On the one hand, the media are declared free to reject whatever advertising they please on grounds of freedom of contract, the right of any business to choose its customers. On the other hand, they are accorded the same freedom on grounds of the First Amendment, the Constitutional reluctance of the courts to regulate the press. The two rationales are not entirely consistent, but both lead to the same conclusion. Whether viewed as an ordinary business or as a special entity, the mass media are entitled to reject whatever advertising they wish.

On either or both of these two grounds, other courts have ruled that the media may reject not only general advertising, but also classifieds and even legal notices. Political advertising may also be rejected. The reasons for the decision are immaterial, even if based on caprice, prejudice, or malice. Also immaterial is the fact that a newspaper has sufficient advertising space available, or that it willingly accepts advertising from other businesses of the same sort. Deciding what ads to reject is, in short, entirely at the discretion of the media themselves.[72]

There are only three exceptions to this principle. First, the media are of course obligated to accept advertising if they have contracted to do so. For this reason, nearly all ad contracts contain a clause explicitly reserving the right of rejection on any grounds whatever.

Second, the decision to reject an advertisement is illegal if it is a restraint of trade. Thus, for example, several media may not conspire together to force an advertiser out of business by rejecting his ads. And the dominant medium in a community may not condition its acceptance of advertising on a pledge not to advertise in competing media. Mere ownership of a *de facto* monopoly, however, does not in itself constitute a restraint of trade. Monopoly media may also reject whatever ads they wish, as long as the rejection is not calculated to preserve the monopoly.[73]

Third, government-owned media may not discriminate among advertisers on ideological grounds; to do so is a violation of the First Amendment. This is a recently established principle, based primarily on two cases–a Wisconsin decision requiring the student newspaper at a state college to accept all political advertising if it accepts any; and a federal decision requiring the New York City Transit Authority to accept a billboard from the Students for a Democratic Society.[74] Neither case, of course, applies to privately owned media.

The right to reject advertising even on the most egregiously irresponsible grounds has been consistently upheld by the courts. In 1969, four Chicago newspapers turned down an ad from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. The ad urged readers not to buy imported clothes, and specifically named Marshall Field & Company as the largest single importer of men's apparel in the Chicago area. The four papers apparently decided to reject the ad because it might be offensive to Marshall Field, a major advertiser.[75]

The union took the case to Federal District Court, which decided in favor of the papers. "Political advertisements," the judge said, "are constitutionally protected to no greater and no lesser extent than other forms of speech, and interference by state action with such expression is prohibited." He added that there was no validity to the argument "that those who can pay for political advertisements are constitutionally entitled to have them published by private businesses.[76] The union promptly appealed the case to the Federal Circuit Court, which affirmed the lower court's decision.[77]

The leading judicial decisions on the right to reject advertising all stem from the print media–newspapers and magazines. Broadcast complaints are customarily taken, not to the courts, but to the Federal Communications Commission. On several occasions (notably in the case of cigarette commercials), the FCC has held that the acceptance of controversial advertising obligates broadcasters to pay adequate attention to competing viewpoints, either through more advertising or through other means. But the Commission has never restricted the right of broadcasters to reject any particular commercial on any grounds whatever.[78]

In fact, the FCC has traditionally imposed on broadcasters an affirmative obligation to reject certain categories of advertising. In the early years of the Commission, it often commented during license hearings on the qualitative merits of certain ads, notably harmful medical advertising, liquor commercials, and ads for contraceptive devices. In addition, the Commission has long held that it is the responsibility of each broadcaster to "assure that no material is broadcast which will deceive or mislead the public." [79]

In 1954, for example, radio station WMPS applied for a television channel in Memphis in competition with station WREC. The former's application was turned down because the station was known to have accepted "bait and switch" advertising. As the Commission put it:

> Acceptance in good faith of all advertising offered unaccompanied by an investigation into the practices of the advertiser is an avoidance of the proper responsibility of the broadcaster. . . . Had more care been exercised by the WMPS management it would have been informed of the undesirability of such advertising and have eliminated it from its programs.[80]

A distinction must be drawn here between FCC standards for broadcast responsibility on the one hand, and criminal and civil liability on the other. The latter is administered by the Federal Trade Commission and the courts, not by the FCC. Traditionally, publishers and broadcasters have been held liable for actionable advertisements only under four very special circumstances: (1) If the ad is patently illegal; (2) If the medium itself is a sponsor of the ad; (3) If the medium voluntarily prepares the ad on behalf of its sponsor; (4) If the medium endorses the ad with a seal of approval or some other explicit guarantee.[81]

It has occasionally been suggested that media liability for actionable advertising should be extended beyond these limits. In a 1927 right-to-reject case, for example, a New York court commented that not only was a newspaper entitled to turn down a misleading advertisement, it was legally obligated to do so.[82] More recently, several "consumer protection" bills have been introduced in Congress that would subject the media to suit on grounds of false advertising even if they were unaware of the deception.[83] Current legislative and common law, however, limits media liability for advertising to the four circumstances listed above.[84]

It is ironic that the only appellate law case dealing with the right or obligation to reject an environmental advertisement concerned an ad from a conservation group. The ad protested the construction of an animal byproducts rendering plant in Denver on the grounds that it would pollute the surrounding countryside. Two Denver newspapers, the *Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News,* refused to print the ad, because it urged consumers to boycott the manufacturer. When the boycott copy was eliminated, they rejected the ad again, this time because it still named the manufacturer and his product line. Following the established precedent, a Federal District Court ruled that the papers were not obligated to carry the ad. The Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the decision.[85]

The current law governing advertising acceptance, then, may be summarized in four principles: (1) The government may through legislation declare certain categories of ads illegal; (2) The media are liable for actionable ads only if the ads are illegal or if the media have sponsored, written, or endorsed them; (3) Broadcasters may be required to air responses to an ad under the Fairness Doctrine, and their advertising acceptance policies may be considered as a factor in license renewal; (4) Under no circumstances are any of the media required to accept a particular advertisement; they may reject any ad they choose, except as limited by contract and anti-trust provisions.

To the extent that the media are reluctant to censor environmental advertising for legal reasons, their reluctance is unjustified.

There is, nonetheless, a much-discussed philosophy that might preclude such censorship. It is both a legal theory and a journalistic one, and it has been most eloquently expressed by Professor Jerome A. Barron of the George Washington Law School:

> The changing nature of the communications process has made it imperative that the law show concern for the public interest in effective utilization of media for the expression of diverse points of view. Confrontation of ideas, a topic of eloquent affection in contemporary decisions, demands some recognition of a right to be heard as a constitutional principle. It is the writer's position that it is open to the courts to fashion a remedy for a right of access. . . .[86]

The legal ramifications of Barron's "right of access" are far-reaching and complex; since the courts have not yet accepted the doctrine, those ramifications are also beyond the scope of this dissertation. What must be considered here is the normative concept of access, the notion that even if the media have the right to reject advertising as they please, they should not exercise that right.

The extreme version of this argument–that the media should accept any advertisement whatever–is seldom seriously advanced. Nearly all observers agree, for example, that the media should retain the right (if not the obligation) to refuse misleading and grossly offensive ads.

Barron himself would limit the right of access to political advertising. After reviewing the major right-to-reject precedents, he comments:

> But the broad holding of these commercial advertising cases need not be authoritative for political advertisement. Indeed, it has long been held that commercial advertising is not the type of speech protected by the first amendment, and hence even an abandonment of the romantic view of the first amendment and adoption of a purposive approach would not entitle an individual to require publication of commercial material.[87]

Similarly, William A. Resneck points out that "presently, newspapers have the right to reject both political and commercial advertisements. To espouse abolition of discretion as to the former practice is not to challenge the latter."[88]

The distinction between political and commercial advertising is much more complex than Barron and Resneck appear to believe. Both authors imply that "political advertising" is more or less the same thing as "ideological advertising." But many commercial ads contain ideological content, either explicitly or implicitly. An ad for a book about the Vietnam war, for example, is clearly ideological, though it is also clearly commercial. So is a liquor ad that advocates (or even implies) the social benefits of drinking. So is an ad for a contraceptive device, or one urging readers to fight recession by purchasing an automobile.

Advocates of the right of access would presumably dispute the media's moral (and legal) right to reject such advertisements. Consider the following additional examples:

* The Los Angeles *Times* refused to print an ad for a commission-free house-buying service, because it competed with profitable classifieds from conventional real estate brokers.[89]
* Four Chicago newspapers, also under pressure from the real estate business, refused to allow an agency to advertise itself as "an equal opportunity broker."[90]
* Again because of advertiser pressure, newspapers around the country have from time to time refused to accept ads for *Consumer Reports* magazine.[91]

All three of these ads are strictly commercial, yet all three are clearly of ideological import. A theory of access that excludes these three ads is a wek theory indeed.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that many ideological advertisements (including some non-commercial ones) are desperately in need of censorship. Toward the end of the 1970 election campaign, a group called the Committee for a Responsible Congress attempted to place a series of ads accusing Democratic candidates of being the tools of radicals and extremists. The *Columbia Journalism Review*, usually a staunch supporter of access, notes with approval that "several conscientious papers . . . rejected the ad."[92]

Similarly, many observers have attacked the magazine industry for encouraging a massive increase in cigarette advertising in the wake of the 1971 ban on broadcast cigarette commercials.[93] Yet the decision to restrict cigarette ads is clearly an ideological one, based on the opinion that cigarettes are harmful to society and the judgment that harmful products should not be entitled to advertising space.

In a different context, Mark E. Watkins has commented that "having applied the fairness doctrine to cigarette advertising on the theory that the commercials impliedly state a position on a controversial issue, the FCC cannot very well argue that advertising does not involve some element of speech protected by the first amendment."[94]

Watkins' point is as applicable to the media as it is to the FCC, and as applicable to other ideological advertising as it is to cigarette commercials. If an ad is sufficiently damaging to society to require censorship or regulation, it is very likely to express (at least by implication) some viewpoint on an issue of public importance. The ads most desperately in need of censorship or regulation are so considered precisely because of the ideology they express and the accuracy or tastefulness with which they express it.

Certainly this is true of environmental advertising. The vast majority of the ads discussed in Chapter Two are objectionable because of the environmental attitudes or opinions they state or imply. The argument that these ads should be rejected is based explicitly on two propositions–that the environment is an issue of public importance, and that the ads promulgate irresponsible attitudes about that issue. An access doctrine that prohibits censorship of any advertisement with ideological content effectively protects those ads most in need of censorship, including the overwhelming majority of environmental advertisements.

As a normative guide for media acceptance standards, then, the distinction between "political" advertising and "commercial" advertising is not helpful.[95] If the definition of a political ad is interpreted strictly, then the genuine problem of access to the media is not significantly alleviated; too many "deserving" ads are not political. But if the definition of a political ad is extended to include all ads with ideological content, then the ads most in need of censorship become uncensorable. At that point the only ads left to the discretion of the media are strictly commercial price messages, which raise few serious censorship issues to begin with.

In lieu of the distinction between political and commercial advertising, a typology of reasons for rejecting advertisements may prove more useful. Thus, most critics would agree that the media should never reject an ad purely for self-serving reasons–because of pressure from competitors, for example. Even the media themselves would accept this statement, though they do not always abide by it.

Similarly, all but the most devoted adherents to the right of access would agree that the media ought to reject advertisements they know to be misleading. Whether political, ideological, or strictly commercial, an ad that is misleading on its face does not deserve to be published or broadcast. (Note, however, that it is currently illegal for broadcasters to censor the content of political (election-related) commercials, even if they are false, misleading, unfair, or libelous.) Once again, the media would overwhelmingly endorse this assessment, though they do not always adhere to it.

In the area of misrepresentation, also, consensus is possible. A demonstrably false advertising claim, whether for a product, an opinion, or a political candidate, is not entitled to publication in the mass media. The frequent failure of the media to eliminate such claims results from procedural considerations, not philosophical ones.

The same may be said, with somewhat less certainty, for offensive advertising. Nearly all offensive ads contain some ideological content; the very fact that much of the public is offended by them renders them controversial and ideological by definition. Nonetheless, even access-oriented critics often agree that it is appropriate for the media to enforce some standards of taste and propriety.

The consensus violently explodes when one reaches the standard of social desirability. A publisher or broadcaster who rejects an ad because it is misleading, false, or offensive is on reasonably safe and familiar terrain. But a publisher or broadcaster who rejects an ad because he personally believes it is likely to influence the public in socially undesirable ways is in deep water indeed. It is with respect to the social desirability standard that access advocates are most adamant, and media executives most hesitant.

No one denies that there are in fact advertisements whose social effects are unfortunate. And no one denies that many such ads are neither illegal, nor offensive, nor false, nor misleading. However, no one agrees as to precisely which ads these are. The media do not have the option of rejecting socially undesirable advertisements. Their option is to reject advertisements which they *believe* to be socially undesirable. They will inevitably disagree with their audiences, their critics, and each other.

In late 1970, the San Francisco *Examiner* announced its decision to refuse to print ads for "pornographic" movies. It could easily have based this decision on the offensiveness of the ads themselves, but instead it reached the independent judgment that the movies, and therefore the ads, were having an evil effect on society. In response, the San Francisco *Chronicle* editorialized:

> After these advertisements have been flatly censored out of its columns, we wonder what the Examiner will turn to next?
>
> Will it delete automobile advertising because large numbers of people are killed by motor vehicles every day?
>
> Will it then refuse advertisements from political candidates with whom the Examiner disagrees or whom the Examiner does not intend to support?
>
> Will it next delete advertisements for those churches at whose altars the Examiner editors do not worship?[96]

However exaggerated, these questions are certainly relevant. If the *Examiner* feels free to reject ads for pornographic movies because the publisher believes them to be evil (though he knows that many disagree), it would presumably feel free to reject ads for any product, service, or ideology about which the publisher had similar convictions. There is no reason why this principle should not extend to automobiles, political candidates, and churches.

At this point the central question is no longer one of legal theory, but rather of journalistic ethics. Does the "social responsibility theory" of press performance require the media to accept even those advertisements they believe to be socially undesirable? Or does the social responsibility theory require the media to reject such advertisements?

The leading authority on social responsibility theory is of course the Commission on Freedom of the Press (Hutchins Commission), whose conclusions and recommendations were published in 1947. It is likely that the Hutchins Commission never considered the question of advertising acceptance standards; certainly none of the Commission documents addresses itself to the problem. But the Commission report does include several brief references to advertising, some of which are relevant.

In discussing editorial bias, for example, the Commission observes that "the individual whose views are not represented on an editorial page may reach an audience through a public statement reported as news, through a letter to the editor, *through a statement printed in advertising space,* or through a magazine article."[97] (Emphasis added)

Frank Allen Philpot infers from this reference that social responsibility and stringent advertising acceptance standards are incompatible:

> Since the freedom of the press is a freedom of the general society—of the body politic—then only society, and not an individual publisher, has a right to limit that freedom. And a publisher limits that freedom when he reduces the breadth of discussion by excluding material from his advertising columns. . . .
>
> But we know that not all types of material should be allowed in the mass media. The examples cited by the Commission are libel, slander and sedition. Who is to decide what should be excluded? At this point the answer should be fairly obvious. Since the freedom of the press is a right of the general society then the society—acting through its elected representatives—has the only right to limit this freedom. And this, I believe, is the logical result of the Commission's philosophy. . . .
>
> Thus we conclude that under the terms of the social responsibility theory a publisher should *not* exclude from his medium those items which he personally believes will have undesirable consequences, but should include all true items which the legislature has not directed him to exclude.[98]

Philpot would limit advertising censorship to ads that are illegal, false, or misleading.

This researcher subscribes to an entirely different interpretation of social responsibility theory. The ethical keystone of the Hutchins Commission's proposals is the notion that the press has a moral obligation to "do the right thing" on its own initiative. This is what distinguishes social responsibility theory (which assumes that if each publisher does as he pleases truth will emerge victorious) and from Soviet theory (which permits the government to determine what the media ought to do). As Theodore Peterson puts it:

> In linking rights and duties, social responsibility theory bears a closer resemblance to Soviet theory than to libertarian. Soviet theory, like social responsibility theory, predicates the exercise of rights on the acceptance of accompanying duties. But there is a profound difference between the two theories. Under Soviet theory, the duty is to the proletariat; under the social responsibility theory, the duty is to one's own conscience.[99]

To be sure, the Hutchins Commission does outline in considerable detail the precise responsibilities of the media. And it goes on to suggest that if the media fail to meet these responsibilities, the government may be forced to step in. But the latter statement is clearly reluctant, an inducement more than a proposal: "If [the media] are controlled by government, we lose our chief safeguard against totalitarianism—and at the same time take a long step toward it."[100] The list of responsibilities, then, must necessarily be no more than a set of guidelines or proposals for the media to consider.

No doubt the Commission was convinced that its notion of the responsibility of the media was the correct one, that if a publisher resolved to abide by his conscience he would wind up abiding by the Commission's proposals. Nonetheless, if the two diverge it is responsibility to one's conscience, not to the Hutchins Commission, that is the essence of social responsibility theory. A publisher is required by the theory to do what he believes is best for society; he is merely urged to believe what the Commission believed.

The Commission's concern for access derives from the recommendation that the media serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism. Peterson notes that "this requirement means that the great agencies of mass communications should regard themselves as common carriers of public discussion, although it does not mean that laws should compel them to accept all applicants for space . . . or even that one can demand, as a right, that the media disseminate his ideas."[101]

This is not a literal common carrier concept at all. It is not the case that the media are to publish whatever they encounter. Rather, they are to publish whatever they consider it socially desirable to publish, bearing in mind the great social desirability of access for conflicting and minority viewpoints.

The validity of this interpretation with respect to access to the news is undeniable. Even the Hutchins Commission does not argue that the media should publish all the news they receive. The bulk of the Commission's report, in fact, is an effort to guide the media in their selection of news.

A case can be made (though the Commission does not make it) for a more literal common carrier view of advertising. The ads, after all, are one of the last resorts available to a viewpoint that has not survived the process of news selection. Certainly the selection criteria for advertising ought to be less stringent than the criteria for news. Advertising criteria are likely to be less stringent than news criteria in any case, since the media depend on advertising as their principal source of revenue. The reluctance to reject too many ads is built into the system. A publisher might justly reject a frivolous news story on the grounds that it is a waste of space, for example, but frivolity is hardly sufficient justification for rejecting an advertisement.

But to argue that he should reject no advertisements whatever, a publisher would first have to demonstrate that society would gain more from completely open advertising columns than it would lose from the most objectionable ads published in those columns. This judgment makes more sense for postal and telephone communications than it does for the mass media–and even the postal and telephone systems make exceptions for obscenity and the like.

All of the media allow for certain exceptions to advertising access. According to social responsibility theory, they must do so whenever they believe society is better served by the denial of access than by a particular advertisement–and under no other circumstances. Thus, a publisher is both entitled and obligated to reject an untruthful ad because of his conviction that society loses more than it gains from exposure to lies. He is similarly entitled and obligated to reject a truthful ad, if similarly convinced that its publication will do society more harm than good.

This is not to say that the media should reject every ad with which they disagree. There is a vast difference between disagreeing with an ad and believing that its harmful social effects outweigh the substantial social advantages of access. Thus, publisher Gould of the San Francisco *Examiner* turns down ads for pornographic movies, but he does not reject ads for political candidates whom he opposes. Nor does Gould refuse to print advertisements for anti-war demonstrations, though he editorially opposes the demonstrators. "The ads are bad for the country," Gould says, "but not to let them into the paper would be worse for the country." [102]

It is in weighing the harmful effects of an ad against the beneficial effects of access that the ideological content of the ad becomes relevant. It is generally true that a viewpoint tends to deserve a hearing in proportion to its coherence and its applicability to some identifiable worldview–its ideological content, in other words. In the environmental area, for example, an ad that urges the audience to purchase a DDT-containing pesticide has a resasonably strong access claim if it explicitly argues that killing insects is more important than protecting against the known environmental hazards. It is much less deserving of a hearing if it finesses the environmental issue and pitches itself to the petty annoyance of mosquitoes on picnics. And its access claims are weaker still if it ignores the environment entire and fails even to mention that the product contains DDT.

In general, then, ideological content tends to increase an advertisement's right of access. An ideological ad must be judged more socially undesirable than a non-ideological ad to justify its rejection. But there are still many non-ideological ads that deserve a hearing, and some ideological ads that do not deserve a hearing.[103]

Similarly, the informational content of an ad also tends to be proportional to its right of access. An ad that says such a product is available at such a place at such a price is strictly informational. If it goes on to say why one might want to buy that product, and does so intelligently and factually, it is even richer in information. By contrast, many ads urge the audience to purchase a product for reasons that have little to do with the nature of the product, or for no reasons at all. Such ads are low in information value, and thus have a weaker case in demanding access to the media. But there are non-informational ads that nevertheless deserve a hearing, and informational ads that do not.

The social responsibility theory, then, requires every media owner to decide with respect to every item–news and advertising alike–whether the public will best be served by carrying or by omitting the item. The desirability of access is one of the criteria to be considered in reaching this decision. It is a criterion that deserves greater weight for advertising than for news, and still greater weight for advertising rich in ideological or informational content. But it is still only one of many criteria. It is always irresponsible to publish or broadcast any advertisement, whatever its nature, without first considering its probable social effects.

There are very few ads that the media are legally obligated to reject, and no ads that they are legally obligated to accept. This is as it should be, given the danger of government control. But on the ethical level, the media are obligated to reject all ads that they believe would do the public more harm than good, and to accept all ads that they believe would do the public more good than harm.[104] This is the true meaning of the social responsibility theory as applied to advertising.

Once the philosophical doubts of publishers and broadcasters have been laid to rest, more practical doubts are likely to surface. These center on two questions: Can I afford to reject all ads I believe are socially undesirable, and how do I go about finding out which ads these are?

The economics of advertising acceptance are not overly complicated. Every rejected ad reduces the gross income of the medium that rejects it by roughly the price of the ad. (There are small corrections for the reduced size of the newspaper, overhead, and the like. Rejected ads may also indirectly benefit the media by increasing their appeal to audiences and other advertisers–but this result is not inevitable and should not be used as the criterion of acceptability.) No doubt there are marginal media in the country today that are already in grave danger of failure, and for which even a few additional rejected ads are likely to turn the danger into a reality. These marginal media cannot be expected to revise their advertising acceptance standards in the direction of greater stringency. Perhaps they should not do so in any case. Survival is clearly one of the most important functions of the media; in a period of dangerous consolidation and monopolization, it may be more important than advertising responsibility.

But it is evident that the vast majority of newspapers, magazines, and broadcast stations can reject a great many additional ads without the slightest danger of economic collapse.

Moreover, a significant percentage–perhaps a majority–of the advertisements likely to be rejected on grounds of social undesirability are salvageable. Only occasionally will the media feel compelled to reject an entire ad category, such as the *Examiner*'s rejection of pornographic movie ads. Many, perhaps most, unacceptable advertisements are capable of revision to make them acceptable.

Of course it is always possible that an advertiser will refuse to revise his ad to suit a particular newspaper, magazine, or broadcast station. This is most likely when the medium's standards are so restrictive that the advertiser stands to gain little or nothing from the revised ad. The New York *Times,* for example, currently requires cigarette advertisements to include the Surgeon General's health warning; since the requirement was instituted, cigarette advertising linage in the *Times* has declined precipitously. (Because of its scrupulous coverage of the dangers of smoking, the *Times* is a poor ad medium for cigarettes in any case. *U. S. News and World Report* imposes the same requirement on cigarette ads, and its volume has been unaffected.)

But whenever it is possible for an advertiser to redesign his ad in such a way that it will satisfy the medium and still attract customers, he is likely to do so–even if he greatly prefers the original version. It is a media truism (one often forgotten by media owners) that advertising boycotts are rarely successful. Advertisers need the media at least as much as the media need advertisers. A metropolitan newspaper, for example, can survive without a particular supermarket, but the supermarket very possibly cannot survive without the newspaper. A shampoo manufacturer depends more heavily on network television than the networks depend on shampoo manufacturers. Even when an advertiser is offended by unfavorable news coverage, his boycott threats seldom materialize. As one newsman put it: "They come back within a few weeks. You can't sell without advertising."[105]

The overwhelming experience of all the media indicates that advertisers do not quit advertising when ordered to revise their ads; they revise the ads. The economic cost of stringent advertising acceptance standards is thus considerably lower than the total price of the rejected advertisements.

The procedural misgivings of publishers and broadcasters also stem from economic considerations; it costs money to investigate the accuracy of advertising claims. (Time is also a consideration, especially for newspapers, but it is seldom the major factor. Most ads are or can be submitted well in advance, and often run for months without change.) There is no doubt that this is true, that few of the media could significantly improve their investigative policies without first employing additional staff.

But the cost should not be prohibitive. Several strategies are available to the media at minimal expense:

(1) The media can make a practice of routinely requiring advertisers to substantiate their claims at the same time as they submit their ads. The New York *Times* does this already, with considerable success.

(2) The media can encourage competitors to point out the flaws in each other's advertising, with suitable substantiation where possible.

(3) The media can solicit complaints from readers, listeners, and viewers, and from interested civic (and pressure) groups in the community.

(4) The media can arrange to share information on advertisers and advertising claims, perhaps instructing their professional associations to set up data banks of evidence and complaints.

(4) The media can make greater use of government information sources, expanding the list of ad categories that are routinely checked with government agencies.

In the long run, the last item may have the greatest potential for significant change at insignificant expense. In June of 1971, the Federal Trade Commission announced a new policy of routinely requiring advertisers to submit evidence in support of advertising claims. The information was to be used by the Commission in the preparation of formal complaints against false advertisers. But it was also to be made available to the public—and, presumably, to the media.[106]

According to William Arbitman of the FTC San Francisco office, the new policy is not a major breakthrough in government regulation of advertising. "It doesn't alter the criteria for formal complaints," he explains. "It just provides the Commission with a backlog of information to refer to when a possible complaint comes up."[107]

But the wholesale scope of the policy and its provision for public exposure are revolutionary indeed. According to the initial announcement, the FTC intends to demand substantiation from one industry per month until all major industries have been covered. In each case the Commission will cite specific ads that seem most in need of documentation. The policy thus falls short of Ralph Nader's proposal that all advertising claims be documented to the FTC automatically, and to members of the public on demand. Except for trade secrets and customer lists, all the raw material will then be made available to the public, along with the Commission's summaries and lists of those manufacturers who failed to provide any documentation at all. Individuals and consumer groups are expected to use this information, not only for their own purchasing decisions, but also as the basis for legal challenges against false advertisers.[108]

So far the FTC has said nothing about making the information available to the media as well, either collectively or individually. But such a step would seem to follow logically from the stated goals of the Commission.

Access to an up-to-date FTC data bank on advertising claims, of course, would greatly reduce the cost to the media of verifying those claims. Publishers and broadcasters would remain free to reach different conclusions from those reached by the FTC, and even to employ different criteria.[109] But the work of collecting documentation would be done by the government at public expense.

It is inevitable (at least in the short run) that the more advertisements a medium rejects, the smaller its profits will be. The cost of investigating the ads cannot be reduced to zero; the price of every ad cannot be recouped through a replacement. But the profit loss can easily be held to an acceptable level, a level that in no way endangers the economic viability of the media.

Publishers and broadcasters who wish to maximize profits at all costs will of course be disinclined to accept even a minimal loss. These individuals must be written off; only public pressure or government regulation will force them to upgrade their advertising acceptance standards.

Responsible publishers and broadcasters, on the other hand, may find this a persuasive syllogism: Environmental advertising is often harmful to society, even in the face of news coverage that tries to counteract it. Social responsibility theory requires the media to reject advertisements they believe to be harmful to society. Therefore, the media should reject much of the environmental advertising they currently accept.

Recommendations

It is not our purpose to tell the media what advertisements to censor and how to censor them. Each publisher and broadcaster must decide for himself what ads are harmful to society and how they can be made acceptable. There is merit in the likelihood that each will decide differently; diversity is the lifeblood of the mass media.

But in deciding what ads ought to be rejected, the media should make use of the widest possible range of information sources—government, industry, civic and pressure groups, readers and viewers, even this dissertation. The objections to environmental advertising have already been outlined. It is appropriate now to state explicitly how those objections might be translated into advertising acceptance standards.

Earlier in this chapter, the following typology of objections to environmental advertising was presented:

I. "Truth" criterion
  A. Factually inaccurate
  B. Factually misleading to the consumer
  C. Fraudulently staged
II. "Environmental responsibility" criterion
  A. Environmentally misleading
    1. Environmentally irrelevant
      a. Ignoring the environment
      b. Suggesting inappropriate solutions
  B. Direct affronts to the environment

Advertisements that violate the "truth" criterion should of course be rejected without fail. This category includes ads that are misleading on their face and ads that are fraudulently staged—both of which the media already feel obliged to reject. It also includes ads that are factually inaccurate. The media currently accept a theoretical obligation to censor these ads as well, but they have not yet evolved procedures for checking the truth of environmental advertising claims. They should do so.

Even publishers and broadcasters with no special concern for the environment should wish to reject untruthful environmental advertisements. Violations of the "environmental responsibility" criterion, on the other hand, are objectionable only to those who agree that the environment is an issue that demands responsibility.

Particularly repugnant to those who share this view are direct affronts to the environment, ads that seem to go out of their way to be environmentally irresponsible. A paper manufacturer who boasts of "the disposable environment" should be instructed to find another pitch for his diapers. The only ads of this sort that may deserve acceptance are those that tackle the issue head-on, explicitly arguing that some environmental issue is an unimportant red herring. Because of its ideological content, this viewpoint has a strong claim to the right of access. But casual anti-environment references have no such claim; a publisher or broadcaster sympathetic to the environmental crisis should feel obliged to reject them.

Advertisements that suggest corporate environmental responsibility are environmentally misleading if the responsibility suggested is greater than the responsibility exercised. This is not a question of truth, but one of judgment and perspective.

Consider the advertising claim, "We spent six million dollars to clean up our Richmond plant." Assuming the statement is true, an environmentally acute (and suspicious) media owner might still ask three question: (1) How does that six million compare with the cost of this ad campaign or with last year's net profits? (2) Did the government require or threaten to require the clean-up? (3) How many plants aside from the Richmond one have yet to be cleaned up? If the answers to these questions seem to shed new light on the ad, the advertiser might legitimately be required to include them. The environmentally concerned media, in short, should endeavor to insure that their advertising content does not paint an overly optimistic picture of corporate environmental responsibility.

Environmentally irrelevant ads are environmentally misleading in that they steer the public in the wrong environmental direction. To catch ads that suggest inappropriate solutions to environmental problems, the media must develop their own expertise or rely on the expertise of others.

Is unsightly litter really the big problem with unrecycled cans, or is it mineral shortage and waste disposal? Is sudsing the big problem with detergents, or is it eutrophication? Are hydrocarbons the big problem with automotive air pollution, or is it nitrogen oxides? If the media do not know the answers to these questions, they should find them out. And ads that suggest the incorrect answers should be appropriately modified.

The largest category of environmental advertising is made up of ads that contain no environmental content whatever, though they concern products or services with significant environmental implications. These are perhaps the most difficult ads to deal with. Though the ads themselves ignore the environment, the environmentally concerned media cannot afford to ignore the ads–for their environmental irrelevance is itself environmentally misleading.

Some environmentalists have suggested–quite seriously–that all ads for environmentally detrimental products and services be banned from the media. Such a broad prohibition, unfortunately, would wreak more havoc than the media or the manufacturers could accommodate. Moreover, such products as automobiles, detergents, and real estate developments are established facets of American society. Environmentally detrimental though they are, their manufacturers have a right to advertise, and their users have a right to be exposed to the ads.

Only the most eschatological of ecologists foresee a day when automobiles, detergents, and real estate developments will cease to exist. As long as they do exist, they must be permitted to advertise.

Lesser restrictions are more feasible. Jerry Mander, for example, has recommended that automobile advertising be limited to strictly informational ads–"We Have The Following Second-Hand Fords Available Today." No ads would be permitted that encouraged new cars, unnecessary trips, pointless accessories, or increased production.[110]

This researcher leans toward a restriction based on ideological rather than informational content. According to this standard, anyone who wished to advertise a product or service with clearly detrimental environmental effects would be required to deal explicitly with the environmental issue. He might content himself with a simple warning–"Caution: This product may be hazardous to the environment." Or he might go on to defend the product on environmental grounds. Either way, he would not be permitted to advertise the product on extraneous grounds without first coming to grips with the environmental question. All quasi-environmental advertisements would be required to become environmental advertisements.

This proposal is not without precedent. The federal government now requires advertisements for cigarettes and cyclamate products to carry an explicit health warning. Where appropriate, the media should require an "environmental health" warning as well.

Another precedent of interest is the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. According to this piece of legislation, every agency of the federal government must publish an "environmental impact statement" concerning every proposed government action that has been attacked on environmental grounds, or that is otherwise deemed environmentally controversial. The media might require a similar "environmental impact statement" from every environmentally controversial advertiser–and require it in every ad.

Something very close to this requirement has recently been proposed for detergent advertising. In January of 1971, the Federal Trade Commission announced that it would seek legislation requiring the following warning in all detergent ads and commercials:

> Warning: Each recommended use level of this product contains [number] grams of phosphorus which contributes to water pollution. Do not use in excess. In soft water areas, the use of phosphorus [phosphates] is not necessary.[111]

The detergent industry is naturally opposed to the regulation. The Soap and Detergent Association has commented that the proposed rule would "raise unnecessary doubts on the part of the housewives."[112]

The federal government should not have the primary responsibility for forcing advertisers to deal explicitly and accurately with environmental problems. That responsibility properly belongs to the media, which must learn to exercise it.

1. See for example the following: Jerry Mander, "Six Months and Nearly a Billion Dollars Later, Advertising Owns Ecology," *Scanlan's*, June, 1970, pp. 54-61. "Advertising–Promoting Nature's Friends," *Time*, August 17, 1970, pp. 58, 61. "Pollution: Puffery or Progress?," *Newsweek*, December 28, 1970, pp. 49-51. Richard L. Moore, "Environment–A New PR Crisis," *Public Relations Journal*, March, 1970, pp. 6-9. Clifford B. Reeves, "Ecology Adds a New PR Dimension," *Public Relations Journal*, June, 1970, pp. 6-9. Nancy Giges, "Pollution–It's Today's Bonanza for Advertisers," *Advertising Age*, April 20, 1970, pp. 1, 216-218. E. B. Weiss, "Management: Don't Kid the Public with Those Noble Anti-Pollution Ads," *Advertising Age*, August 3, 1970, pp. 35, 36, 38. Jerry Mander, "The Media and Environmental Awareness," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Environmental Handbook*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, pp. 253-262. Thomas Turner, "Eco-Pornography or How to Spot an Ecological Phony," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Environmental Handbook*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, pp. 263-267. Thomas Turner, "Eco-Pornography Revisited," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Voter's Guide to Environmental Politics*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, pp. 116-126.

2. "Pollution: Puffery or Progress?," *Newsweek*, December 28, 1970, pp. 49-51.

3. "Santa Barbara: How Is It Really?," *Advertising Age*, June 16, 1969, p. 16. The editorial also points out that the Union Oil Company, which was responsible for the spill in the first place, helped finance the campaign.

4. Robert Gillette, "Ethyl Corp. Accused of False Ads," San Francisco *Examiner*, November 11, 1970, pp. 1, 6.

5. Herbert G. Lawson, "Chevron's F-310 Gas: A Lesson In How Not to Promote a Product," *Wall Street Journal*, January 7, 1971, pp. 1, 6.

6. "Pollution: Puffery or Progress?," *Newsweek*, December 28, 1970, pp. 49-51.

7. In January of 1971, the Federal Trade Commission announced that it would seek legislation requiring a phosphate warning in all detergent ads and commercials. The warning would include the phosphate content of the brand, the information that phosphates contribute to water pollution, and the injunction to use no more than necessary. ["Warning Sought on Detergents," San Francisco *Chronicle*, January 26, 1971, p. 3.] It is difficult to interpret this proposed move as consumer protection; instead, the FTC appears to be getting interested in environmental protection.

8. Thomas Turner, "Eco-Pornography or How to Spot an Ecological Phony," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Environmental Handbook*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, p. 265. It is possible, of course, that "NEODOL 25" may help counteract detergent action as well as sudsing–but the ad makes no such claim.

9. Jerry Mander, "Six Months and Nearly a Billion Dollars Later, Advertising Owns Ecology," *Scanlan's*, June, 1970, p. 59. Mander is the principal advertising representative for the Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club, and other West Coast conservation groups. His commercial accounts are rigidly screened for environmental responsibility.

10. Thomas Turner, "Eco-Pornography or How to Spot an Ecological Phony," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Environmental Handbook*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, p. 265.

11. "Pass the Environmental Napkins, Please," *Sales Management*, May 1, 1970, p. 62.

12. Scott is also under attack for polluting the air and water around its 13 plants in eight states. "We haven't yet found a lenient state," notes the same Scott executive in an adjoining article. ["Paper's New Bag: Ecology," *Sales Management*, May 1, 1970, pp. 62-63.]

13. Image advertising may, however, stimulate genuine responsibility. "One shouldn't scoff," notes *Business & Society* magazine. "Getting on the record is sometimes half the battle." ["Lip-Service There Is," *Business & Society*, July 7, 1970, p. 3.]

14. Thomas Turner, "Eco-Pornography Revisited," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Voter's Guide to Environmental Politics*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, p. 116.

15. "How International Paper Kept Its Cool," *Business & Society*, June 9, 1970, pp. 3-6.

16. The difficulties of measuring advertising effectiveness are well discussed in Daniel Starch, *Measuring Advertising Readership and Results,* McGraw-Hill, New York, 1966; and in John J. Wheatley (ed.), *Measuring Advertising Effectiveness,* American Marketing Association, New York, 1969. For an excellent overview and bibliography, see Martin Mayer, *The Intelligent Man's Guide to Sales Measures of Advertising,* Advertising Research Foundation, New York, 1965.

17. There is no shortage of unsupported testimonials to the value or valuelessness of environmental advertising. See, for example, Clifford B. Reeves, "Ecology Adds a New PR Dimension," *Public Relations Journal,* June, 1970, pp. 6-9 (it works). Or see E. B. Weiss, "Management: Don't Kid the Public with Those Noble Anti-Pollution Ads," *Advertising Age,* August 3, 1970, pp. 35, 36, 38 (it doesn't work). Interviews with advertising representatives of the gasoline and detergent industries have convinced this researcher that neither side is willing to offer data in support of its viewpoint, though both sides claim to possess such data.

18. "Does Ecology Sell?," *Sales Management,* November 15, 1970, pp. 22, 40.

19. Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication,* The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1960, pp. 62-97.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-61. The new attitude to be built, of course, is that F-310 or low-phosphate detergents represent a major breakthrough in the preservation of the environment. A third attitude may well be created as a by-product, that the business establishment is making significant progress in solving pollution problems.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120. See also Daniel Starch, *Measuring Advertising Readership and Results,* McGraw-Hill, New York, 1966, pp. 93-97. For a longer and more philosophical treatment, see James Playsted Wood, *Advertising and the Soul's Belly,* University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1961. On p. 86, Wood quotes a London advertising man of the 1880s: "The first time a man looks at an advertisement, he does not see it. The second time he does not notice it. The third time he is conscious of its existence. The fourth time he faintly remembers having seen it before. The fifth time he reads it. . . . The ninth time he wonders if it amounts to anything. The tenth time he thinks he will ask his neighbor if he has tried it. The eleventh time he wonders how the advertiser makes it pay. The twelfth time he thinks perhaps it may be worth something. . . . The twentieth time he sees it, he buys the article, or instructs his wife to do so."

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-103, 113-116. See also Chester A. Insko, *Theories of Attitude Change,* Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1967, pp. 43-51, 276-278.

23. See for example Alan Booth, "The Recall of News Items," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* v. 34, pp. 604-610, Winter, 1970-1971.

24. Repetition with variation–the same content in different forms–is known to be even more effective than simple repetition. See Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication,* The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1960, pp. 119-120.

25. Unless otherwise cited, all information on F-310 advertising strategy is based on interviews with three Socal executives: Harry C. Honstein, Advertising Representative; Frank Fenton, Assistant Advertising Manager; and Claude I. Allen, Assistant Marketing Research Director. All three interviews were conducted on May 28, 1971.

26. See also Robin Nelson, "After Gasoline Games, What's Next?," *Marketing/Communications,* March, 1969, pp. 30-40.

27. "The Big Balloon Caper," *Newsweek,* April 27, 1970, p. 80.

28. "Top 100 Spot TV Spenders: '70 and '69," *Advertising Age,* May 10, 1971, p. 86. These figures are only estimates, calculated on the basis of net time figures for 75 markets. The actual expenditures are a closely guarded secret of the Standard Oil Company of California.

29. "How Oil Spends Its Ad Money," *National Petroleum News* Factbook Issue, May, 1971, p. 32. The 1969 figures are estimates; the 1970 figures are estimates based on the estimates.

30. Los Angeles *Times,* January 27, 1970, part 2, p. 2.

31. *Ibid.*, January 16, 1970, part 4, p. 16.

32. Bob Roberts, "F-310: Will It Affect Price Wars?," *California Oil World*, April, 1970, p. 12.

33. "Here are the National, State Market Shares," *National Petroleum News* Factbook Issue, May, 1971, pp. 127-128. It should be noted, however, that share-of-the-market is calculated in terms of gallonage, and thus does not reflect Socal's increased profits per gallon during the Southern California price wars. Socal's gross sales in 1970 were ten percent higher than in 1969—the highest percentage gain for any major gasoline company. The gross sales of the Shell Oil Company, by contrast, increased only two percent from 1969 to 1970. Similarly, Socal's net income in 1970 was 0.2 percent higher than its net income in 1969, despite the added expense of F-310. Most competing gasoline companies saw net income decline in 1970; Shell's net income, for example, declined by 19 percent. "Oil Company Annual Financial Reports for 1970," *National Petroleum News*, Factbook Issue, May, 1971, pp. 30-31. Of course, many other factors could account for these figures, aside from the F-310 price wars. And Socal executives, who are interested primarily in share-of-the-market, view 1970 as an unsuccessful year.

34. Letter from Frank Fenton, June 9, 1971.

35. Mark Emond, "Socal Antismog Gasoline Shows Clout, But Pricing Posture Is Drawback," *National Petroleum News*, February, 1970, p. 20.

36. Peter Linton of the Stanford University Department of Communication conducted the interviews. The interview schedule and sampling design were prepared by this researcher, who also analyzed the data. A brief pretest resulted in the amendment and addition of several questions.

37. In this context, 23 environmentalists and petroleum industry leaders were asked to assess the effect of gasoline environmental advertisements on the public demand for an alternative to the internal combustion engine. Both groups split about evenly. Peter B. Venuto of the Citizens Against Air Pollution in San Jose commented that F-310 advertising was designed in part "to convince a naive public that the oil companies are doing something to solve the pollution problem. Any claims that the problem is being solved reduce the demand for alternatives. Such claims lull the public." John A. Maga of the California Air Resources Board, on the other hand, stated: "I doubt that the advertising of exhaust emission control by the various gasoline manufacturers has had an important impact on the demand for alternatives. . . . The public reads and hears much more about the air pollution problem from other sources." William P. Lear of Lear Motors (developer of a steam-driven automobile) saw gasoline environmental advertisements as "a threat to the move toward genuine improvement. . . especially damaging because of their proven fraudulence." T. E. Gilmore of the Phillips Petroleum Company said the ads "probably" had such an effect, but added: "To answer this question would require an extensive and expensive research study." Despite the survey data, the question remains an open one.

38. See, for example, Stephen A. Greyser and Raymond A. Bauer, "Americans and Advertising: Thirty Years of Public Opinion,'. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, v. 30, pp. 69-78, Spring, 1966.

39. Quoted without citation in Nicholas Johnson, "Life Before Death in the Corporate State," Federal Communications Commission *News*, November 5, 1970, p. 54.

40. *Media Records*, San Francisco, p. 206.

41. "Advertising Report," *Detergents and Specialties*, November, 1970, pp. 40-42, 48.

42. "Detergents: Upstarts Challenge the Big Three," *Marketing/Communications*, May, 1971, pp. 22-26.

43. "Does Ecology Sell?," *Sales Management*, November 15, 1970, p. 22.

44. Terrence O'Flaherty, "The Big Clean-Up," San Francisco *Chronicle*, February 23, 1970, p. 32.

45. "Partial Transcript of NEWSROOM Program," March 12, 1971, p. 6.

46. "Does Ecology Sell?," *Sales Management*, November 15, 1970, p. 22.

47. Nancy Giges, "Detergent Midgets Catch Big 3 in Environment Derby," *Advertising Age*, March 15, 1971, pp. 3, 94.

48. Telephone interview with Donald Rogers, June 28, 1971.

49. "Detergents: Upstarts Challenge the Big Three," *Marketing/Communications.* May, 1971, pp. 22-26.

50. Letter from G. R. Snider, Jr., June 10, 1971.

51. "Soap, Detergent Sales Set Record in 1970," *Detergents and Specialties,* May, 1971, p. 78.

52. "Detergents: Upstarts Challenge the Big Three," *Marketing/Communications,* May, 1971, pp. 22-26.

53. "No-Phosphate Bandwagon Rolling in High Gear," *Detergents and Specialties,* May, 1971, p. 101.

54. "In the Public Interest," *Detergents and Specialties,* October, 1970, p. 15.

55. Thomas Turner advises environmentalists to "pressure the media," but the results of his own complaints about a series of *Life* magazine ads for Suzuki motorcycles are not encouraging. "*Life* replied huffily that '. . . products manufactured under the law have a right to be advertised . . .' and 'We also feel sure that the companies you mention are also aware of their responsibility to conduct their operations at a minimum risk to the environment and are continually seeking ways to do so.' " Thomas Turner, "Eco-Pornography Revisited," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Voter's Guide to Environmental Politics,* Ballantine, New York, 1970, p. 125. A series of Fairness Doctrine complaints to the Federal Communications Commission about gasoline advertising (including F-310) met with similar lack of success; the FCC agreed with the stations and networks that no fairness issue was involved. In 1971, however, the Commission did rule that an Esso ad dealing with the Alaska pipeline raised controversial public issues and was thus subject to the Fairness Doctrine. "Fairness Extended to 'Message' Spots," *Broadcasting,* July 5, 1971, p. 41. Environmentalist pressure on broadcasters, then, may stand some chance of succeeding.

56. In 1970, the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company ran a series of newspaper and magazine ads defending the Alaska pipeline on environmental grounds and offering to send proof on request. The "proof," to those who requested it, turned out to be a series of proposals for yet-to-be-done experiments. Only the New York *Times* questioned these ads, and not one newspaper or magazine asked to see the proof before running the ads. Letter from Carter Barcus (Alyeska Public Relations Manager), April 15, 1971. Similarly, the Standard Oil Company of California received no requests from the media for substantiation of claims until after the Federal Trade Commission accused its F-310 ads of being false and misleading. Interview with Frank Fenton (Socal Assistant Advertising Manager), May 28, 1971. Even after the FTC complaint, most of the media continued to run the ads; only a small minority asked for documentation or demanded changes.

57. A number of newspapers and magazines, including *Newsday* and the *Reader's Digest,* have run special supplements dealing with the environment, soliciting (and in some cases writing) environmental advertisements to appear in the supplements. The Contra Costa *Times* environmental supplement of June 27, 1971, ran 68 pages.

58. In the three-year period 1968-1970, the Federal Communications Commission received 422 listener complaints about Bay Area radio stations. Of the 87 complaints that dealt with advertising, the majority commented generally on taste or volume. Only 19 complaints referred to specific ads. Of these, five concerned social effects (drugs, gambling, cigarettes); four concerned offensiveness (sex, racial and religious slurs); four concerned misleading ads (land development, retail); and six concerned miscellaneous complaints. Copies of the letters were supplied by Lloyd Prentice of the Stanford University Department of Communication.

59. Three newspapers, the Napa *Register,* the San Rafael *Independent-Journal,* and the Richmond *Independent,* sent copies of detailed policy statements on political advertising. The main considerations were libel, timing (no new issues close to an election), and payment. Several broadcast stations, on the other hand, indicated a dislike for overly controversial political ads. In this context, see George Murphy, "2 Stations Refuse Anti-War Message," San Francisco *Chronicle,* April 15, 1971, p. 10.

60. Unless otherwise cited, all information in this section is based on an interview with Charles L. Gould (Publisher, San Francisco *Examiner*), June 10, 1971.

61. "Drawing the Line on Porno Ads," San Francisco *Examiner*, December 8, 1970, p. 38. In rebuttal, the more liberal *Chronicle* editorially pointed out (December 10) that the *Examiner* willingly shared in the profits from *Chronicle* movie ads. The *Examiner* replied (December 10) that it would donate its share to charity.

62. Unless otherwise cited, all information in this section is based on an interview with Howard Schonberger (Display Advertising Director, Palo Alto *Times*), June 10, 1971.

63. Unless otherwise cited, all information in this section is based on an interview with Richard R. Kitson (Advertising Service Manager, *Sunset* magazine), June 11, 1971.

64. Memorandum from "Joe Williamson" to "Rich Kitson," December 28, 1970. Furnished to this researcher by Richard R. Kitson.

65. Unless otherwise cited, all information in this section is based on an interview with A. Dean Lucas (Film and Traffic Supervisor, KPIX Television), June 9, 1971.

66. However belatedly, KPIX was harder on the F-310 commercials than most Bay Area stations. See Thomas Asher, "Tanks but No Tanks," *New Republic*, June 26, 1971, pp. 17-19.

67. Unless otherwise cited, all information in this section is based on an interview with Jack W. Riaska (Continuity Director, KSFO Radio), June 9, 1971.

68. Letter from R. C. Hollingsworth to Jack Goldman, June 17, 1968. Copies of the complaint and Mr. Hollingsworth's reply are on file at the Federal Trade Commission, and were supplied to this researcher by Lloyd Prentice of the Stanford University Department of Communication.

69. *Uhlman v. Sherman*, 22 Ohio NPNS 225, 31 Ohio Dec 54, 1919. Later decisions in the same jurisdiction explicitly rejected this precedent.

70. 215 Ia 1276, 247 NW 813, 1933.

71. *Bloss v. Federated Publications Inc.* 5 Mich App 74, 145 NW2d 800, 1966. Affirmed by the Michigan Supreme Court, 380 Mich 485, 1968.

72. For a brief summary of the principal relevant cases, see David C. Hamilton, "Advertising: The Right to Refuse," Freedom of InformationCenter Report No. 187, School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., 1967. See also the legal annotation at 18 ALR3d 1286.

73. See Daniel J. Baum, "Self-Regulation and Anti-Trust: Suppression of Deceptive Advertising by the Publishing Media," *Syracuse Law Review*, vol. 12, no. 3, Spring, 1961, pp. 289-304.

74. Though legally unaffected, the newspaper industry opposed both decisions. See "Two Judges–Two Opinions," *Editor & Publisher*, January 3, 1970, p. 6.

75. See for example "A Case To Watch," *The Nation*, October 6, 1969, pp. 332-333. Also Ron Dorfman, "Freedom of Press Belongs to Man Who Owns One," *Chicago Journalism Review*, November, 1969, p. 7.

76. "Judge Reaffirms Daily's Right to Refuse Ads," *Advertising Age*, December 29, 1969, p. 4. See also "Papers' Right to Bar Ads Upheld in Court," *Editor & Publisher*, January 3, 1970, p. 18.

77. "Court Reaffirms Newspaper's Right to Reject Advertising," *Advertising Age*, December 28, 1970, p. 31. See also "Free Press Belongs to Man Who Owns One (Continued)," *Chicago Journalism Review*, December, 1970, p. 9.

78. Mark E. Watkins, "Implications of the Extension of the Fairness Doctrine to Editorial Expressions Implied in Commercial Advertising," *Albany Law Review*, vol. 34, Winter, 1970, pp. 452-464.

79. "In the Matter of Liaison Between FCC and FTC Relating to False and Misleading Radio and Television Advertising," 22 FCC 1572 (1957). See also Carl R. Ramey, "The Federal Communications Commission and Broadcast Advertising: An Analytical Review," *Federal Communications Bar Journal*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1966, pp. 71-116. See also "In the Matter of Commercial Advertising," 36 FCC 45 (1964). Also "Licensee Responsibility With Respect to the Broadcast of False, Misleading, or Deceptive Advertising," FCC Public Notice 61-1316, Mimeo. no. 11833, November 7, 1961.

80. The case is reported and quoted without citation in Morton J. Simon, *The Law for Advertising and Marketing*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1956, pp. 349-350. In earlier cases, a number of radio stations lost their licenses because of their willing acceptance of deceptive patent medicine advertising.

81. Leon C. Smith, "Local Station Liability for Deceptive Advertising," *Journal of Broadcasting*, vol. 15, no. 1, Winter, 1970-1971, pp. 107-112. See also Sidney A. Diamong, "Courts Test Whether Publisher Is Responsible for Seal of Approval," *Advertising Age*, February 9, 1970, pp. 59-60. Additionally, of course, the media are liable for libelous advertisements.

82. *Amalgamated Furniture Factories v. Rochester Times-Union*, 128 Misc 673, 219 NYS 705 (1927). The comment was *obiter dictum* and was ignored by later decisions.

83. The media naturally opposed the bills. See "Broadcasters Liable for False Ads?," *Broadcasting*, April 27, 1970, p. 49.

84. Government regulation of advertising acceptance (and of advertising itself) depends on a complex interpretation of the First Amendment. See "Deceptive Advertising," *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 80, no. 5, March, 1967, pp. 1008-1163, esp. pp. 1027-1038.

85. "Court Sustains 'Reasonable' Refusal to Publish an Ad," *Editor & Publisher*, February 27, 1971, p. 22.

86. Jerome A. Barron, "Access to the Press–A New First Amendment Right," *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 80, 1967, p. 1678. See also Jerome A. Barron, "An Emerging First Amendment Right of Access to the Media?," *George Washington Law Review*, vol. 37, 1969, pp. 487-509.

87. Jerome A. Barron, "Access to the Press–A New First Amendment Right," *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 80, 1967, p. 1668.

88. William A. Resneck, "The Duty of Newspapers to Accept Political Advertising–An Attack on Tradition," *Indiana Law Journal*, vol. 44, 1969, p. 232. Both Barron and Resneck, of course, are arguing not only that the media should accept all political advertising, but that the media should be legally required to accept all political advertising. This involves a reinterpretation of the First Amendment, which is now thought to prohibit the courts from interfering with the media, *particularly* with respect to political communications; Barron and Resneck urge interference *only* for political communications. When addressed to the media instead of the government, the normative question is much simpler.

89. Gene R. Beley, "This Ad Was Unacceptable," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Winter, 1966-1967, pp. 48-49.

90. "Ban No-Bias Home Ads," *Chicago Journalism Review*, May, 1969, p. 5.

91. Edward J. Metzen, "Advertising as a Source of Information," in *Freedom of Information in The Market Place*, Freedom of Information Center, Columbia, Missouri, 1967, p. 85.

92. "Covering the 'Smears,' " *Columbia Journalism Review*, Winter, 1970-1971, pp. 2-3. The editors also note, with apparently equal approval, that the Washington *Post* accepted the ad on grounds of access, but accompanied it with a discrediting editorial.

93. Thomas Whiteside, "Selling Death," *New Republic*, March 27, 1971, pp. 15-17. Whiteside urges legislation banning cigarette advertising in the print media as well.

94. Mark E. Watkins, "Implications of the Extension of the Fairness Doctrine to Editorial Expressions Implied in Commercial Advertising," *Albany Law Review*, vol. 34, Winter, 1970, p. 455n.

95. As a legal principle, this criterion may be required by the First Amendment. See "Deceptive Advertising," *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 80, no. 5, March, 1967, pp. 1027-1038.

96. "The Case of the Obscene Cash Register," San Francisco *Chronicle*, December 10, 1970, p. 60. It has been suggested that this public debate between the two newspapers was little more than a public relations gimmick. The issue is nevertheless a real one.

97. Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1947, p. 24.

98. Letter from Frank Allen Philpot, undated, 1971. Philpot is a candidate for the Public Affairs Ph.D. in the Department of Communication at Stanford.

99. Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1956, p. 98.

100. Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1947, p. 5.

101. Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1956, pp. 89-90.

102. Interview with Charles L. Gould, June 10, 1971.

103. This disagrees with the position of the American Civil Liberties Union that all ideological ads should be accepted. See Robert J. Gwyn, "Opinion Advertising and the Free Market of Ideas," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 34, Summer, 1970, pp. 246-255.

104. In 1960, Federal Trade Commission Chairman Earl W. Kintner put it this way: "In my opinion, the public and moral responsibility of advertisers . . . must in turn be shared by the media. . . . Whether this sharing of public and moral responsibility should also involve a sharing of legal responsibility . . . is another matter, involving serious policy considerations." Quoted in Daniel Jay Baum, "Self Regulation and Antitrust: Suppression of Deceptive Advertising by the Publishing Media," *Syracuse Law Review*, vol. 12, no. 3, Spring, 1961, p. 291.

105. Francis Pollock, "Consumer Reporting: Underdeveloped Region," *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June, 1971, p. 43. Exposing evil ads in the news, by the way, is likely to be as costly (if note more costly) as requiring acceptable ads to begin with.

106. Carole Shifrin, "FTC Will Demand Proof of Ad Claims," Washington *Post*, June 11, 1971, pp. 1, A10. See also "Car Makers Ordered to Prove Claims," San Francisco *Chronicle*, July 14, 1971, pp. 1, 28.

107. Telephone interview with William Arbitman, July 15, 1971.

108. Carole Shifrin, "FTC Will Demand Proof of Ad Claims," Washington *Post*, June 11, 1971, pp. 1, A10.

109. In this context, it is worth noting that the FTC is apparently very interested in misleading environmental advertising. As FTC Executive Director Basil J. Mezines told a conference of manufacturers: "The Commission will not allow anyone to take advantage of [environmental] concerns by falsely suggesting that products have 'anti-pollution' qualities." Carole Shifrin, "Ads and Ecology," Washington *Post*, May 12, 1971, p. C-10. Of course the media's interest in environmental advertising (as in all advertising) should extend beyond misrepresentation to include social effects.

110. Jerry Mander, "The Media and Environmental Awareness," in Garrett De Bell (ed.), *The Environmental Handbook*, Ballantine, New York, 1970, pp. 256-257.

111. "Warning Sought on Detergents," San Francisco *Chronicle*, January 26, 1971, p. 3.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Chapter Six

COVERING THE NUCLEAR POWER DEBATE: THE PRESS AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Coverage of utility decision-making on nuclear power presents for the press a most difficult subject: traditional news pegs are rare and important decisions in the siting procedure are made, intentionally, with little or no fanfare; the scientific pros and cons involved are difficult for non-scientists to fathom; a decade or more is involved from the time the utility first decides to construct a plant until it is ready to begin operation; much scientific information about each plant is a matter of public record, but few news operations are equipped to wade through such material for newsworthy items; and some of the most important information, and decision-making, is closed to the press by virtue of the non-government status of the utility industry.

Despite all these obstacles, the Nation's daily newspapers have, with varying success, come to grips with the nuclear dilemma. This section is a close look at newspaper performance in reporting three nuclear power plant sitings in Northern California, and a more general look at the efforts of newspapers in other parts of the country where plants are being sited. Among the questions to be answered are: 1) What is the overall quantity and quality of coverage? 2) Which papers have the responsibility of coverage–smaller dailies near the often rural plant sites, or the more distant metropolitan press? 3) Does press performance correlate with whether or not the plant was challenged by a citizens group? 4) Does press performance correlate with the type of utility being covered–investor-owned or public? 5) How early in the siting procedure is the press beginning coverage? 6) What incidents in that procedure are being covered, and is the public being provided advance notice or preparation for these incidents? 7) What issues in the nuclear dilemma are receiving the best public airing–and which are being ignored? 8) Do editors believe extension of access legislation to cover public utilities would be useful? and 9) How important has newspaper advertising been in public education on the nuclear dilemma?

Constructing Nuclear Power Plants

The electric power industry in 1971 is faced with some difficult, far-reaching, potentially explosive decisions. The industry has the legal obligation to plan for the power needs of the nation in the next few decades, based on an increasing population, the increasing per capita need for electric power, and expanding industrial demands. At present, the industry depends to a great extent on fossil fuels as an energy source to produce electric power, and there is much scientific evidence to show that at least oil and natural gas are getting in short supply. The industry feels that by the year 2000 a new energy source must be in common use to provide for the Nation's power needs.[1] The current concerns over air pollution have made the industry somewhat defensive about the pollutants coming from fossil fuel plants. Thus, a clean fuel which is in large supply could solve both these serious problems.

In 1954, the Atomic Energy Commission decided to release to the electric industry the nuclear "secrets" it possessed, which might lead to the use of atomic power to produce electricity. This was part of the so-called "Atoms for Peace" program or *Project Plowshare,* which has as its goal the use of atomic energy for other than destructive purposes. At first the investor-owned utilities were unwilling to experiment with plants in which enormous heat, generated through the controlled fission of a uranium fuel core, would convert water into steam, which would in turn operate electricity-producing turbines. The technology was new and unfamiliar, and it was not clear that such plants could produce power at a competitive cost with fossil fuel plants. Throughout the 1950's and early 1960's the AEC, in the anomalous position of both regulating and fostering growth in the use of atomic energy, urged such development on the utilities. Whether out of recognition by the IOU's that if *they* did not enter this field, the government would (as a competitor), or because they were indeed convinced that nuclear power plants were the hope of the future, they began construction of such plants in large numbers by the mid-1960's.

The official position of the utilities now is that atomic power can solve both the serious problems mentioned above. Fissionable materials (assuming success in developing breeder reactors) will take over for the dwindling fossil fuels, and nuclear power plants will not emit the air pollutants which result in the combustion of coal or oil–in this sense they are "clean."

Scientists and non-scientists, however, have raised a number of objections to the construction of such plants, most of them concerned with the safety of those Americans living near the plant sites. While it is not necessary to present a detailed discussion of these problems, a brief inventory will serve to indicate that the utilities may have jumped from the frying pan into the fire in switching from fossil fuel to nuclear plants[2]: an industrial-type accident in such a plant could have fatal consequences for all those working in the plant, and a radiation leak would be dangerous for those living in the area; the technology has not adequately been developed for the disposal of nuclear waste materials, again raising the possibility of radiation leaks from accidents in transportation or storage; large amounts of water used in cooling the fissionable materials will be returned to the source at temperatures which may be injurious to marine biota; the accumulation in the environment of waste radionuclides from the plant may, in the long run, be injurious to the health of all Americans; and various lesser issues. Such essentially non-scientific questions have been raised as legal liability and insurance in case of a nuclear accident, the cost in dollars to the consumer of such plants, methods of guarding against sabotage of nuclear plants, police and fire contingency plans in case of a nuclear accident in a populated area, and the role the public should play in the siting procedure.

Because of the work of some organized citizens' groups, utilities in many areas (including San Francisco, New York City, and Baltimore) have had great difficulty siting and building nuclear power plants. In some instances, the utilities have had to move the plant sites well away from urban areas, thus decreasing the danger from an accident, but increasing the cost of delivering the electric power to the point that some critics believe rates must increase dramatically. In other instances, the utilities have moved smoothly ahead in their plans, unencumbered by challenges from either the public or government.

If nuclear power plants cannot be proven safe to the satisfaction of the more eminent scientific critics, the utilities could face a Hobson's choice: build fossil fuel plants only and risk power shortages in the decade to come and continue to pollute the air, or build nuclear power plants and risk serious nuclear accidents and other environmental damage. Whatever the utilities and the commissions which regulate them decide to do will be of the greatest importance to the public.

(It should be clear that it is not the intent of the author to pass judgment on the nuclear dilemma. This is a job for utility executives, scientists, politicians, and the concerned public, not communication researchers *or* newspapermen. But to the extent that nuclear power plant siting is an important issue in a community, the media have the responsibility to report all sides of the controversy, both the scientific questions and the non-scientific.)

Three California Situations

The two largest electric utilities in Northern California–Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District–have both been involved in the construction of nuclear power plants. From their experience, three cases were chosen for close examination of press performance. A brief historical sketch of each should help explain its inclusion in the study and make some of the inferences from the data clear.

Bodega Head

PG&E was one of the first utilities in the country to attempt commercial operation of a nuclear power plant. The location was a ruggedly handsome point on the Sonoma County coast near the fishing town of Bodega Bay, about 40 miles north of San Francisco, just west of Santa Rosa. With the strong support of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the utility quietly announced its plans in the late 1950's. The first public hearing on the plant occurred in 1962 when the Army Corps of Engineers took testimony on the utility's request to construct an access road to the site. Opposition to the road (and the plant)–largely on aesthetic grounds, since much less information was generally available at that time on the environmental impact of a plant–was led by one of the property owners on Bodega Head who was reluctant to sell, a San Francisco attorney, members of the Sierra Club, and a conservation writer.

Opponents lost out with the Army Corps and failed to make an appearance at the public hearings in San Francisco before the State Public Utilities Commission on the granting of a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of the plant. An avalanche of letters to the PUC following the hearings from opponents who felt that they had not had sufficient time or notice to prepare their say persuaded the Commission to hold a second set of hearings, at which much opposition to the plant was put on record.

Despite the opposition, the PUC granted the certificate, and PG&E awaited construction approval from the AEC. In 1964, however, an advisory committee to the AEC concluded that the plant was sited too close to the San Andreas fault, and that the utility did not have adequate, tested safeguards to prevent a plant accident in the event of an earthquake. Three days after this announcement, before the AEC had made a final disposition of the application, PG&E withdrew its request for a permit and gave up plans to construct at the site.

Bodega Head is a case of an investor-owned utility (IOU) siting in a challenged situation. The nearest local daily to the site is the Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat,* whose circulation in 1958 was 30,503. The nearest metropolitan area is San Francisco, and the dominant papers in The City at that time were the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner.* The *Chronicle* was chosen for study because, from 1958 through 1964, it was the paper on the economic upswing; and by 1965 it was clearly the dominant paper. Its circulation in 1958 was 225,429.

Rancho Seco

The 1965 decision by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) to "go nuclear" made it one of the very few public utilities, with the exception of the Tennessee Valley Authority, to take this step. They chose an inland location near Galt, twenty-five miles southeast of Sacramento. Land was first purchased in

March 1966, and a year and a half later the utility submitted a construction permit application. SMUD is not subject to PUC jurisdiction, so the only public hearings on the plant were held by the AEC in September 1968. No significant opposition to the plant surfaced and the hearings were smooth and short. Permission to construct was granted the next month.

By summer of 1971 construction was nearing completion, and the utility filed for an operating license. It is not expected that any future difficulties will arise, and the plant should be "on-line" sometime in 1972.

The nearest local daily is the Lodi *News-Sentinel,* whose circulation in 1965 was 9,049. (The City of Lodi owns the electrical system for the community, but the power itself is purchased from PG&E. Lodi made an unsuccessful effort to purchase the excess power to be generated by Rancho Seco which would not be needed by Sacramento. Thus, although Lodi is technically within PG&E's area of service, it is tied both geographically and economically to Rancho Seco.) The nearest metropolitan area is Sacramento, and the dominant paper is the *Bee*. Circulation in 1958 was 172, 254. Rancho Seco is an example of a public utility siting in an unchallenged situation.

Davenport

Before 1980 PG&E hopes to have at least two more nuclear plants on the California coastline in addition to the small unit which has been operating at Humboldt Bay near Eureka since 1963. One of the proposed sites is Davenport in Santa Cruz County, a tiny town located between San Jose and Santa Cruz. PG&E has just begun to develop the site—an agreement has not yet been reached with the State Power Plant Siting Committee, and the land is still under *option* to the utility. Already significant citizen opposition to the plant has developed, and two unofficial public forums have been held under the auspices of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to educate the public on nuclear plants. Thus far all important events in the history of the plant have taken place between April and June 1970.

The nearest local daily is the Santa Cruz *Sentinel,* whose 1970 circulation was 19,709. The nearest metropolitan area is San Jose, and the dominant paper is the *Mercury*, whose 1970 circulation was 126,382. Davenport is an example of an IOU siting in what is developing as a challenged situation.

The Content Analysis

Given time and manpower considerations, it was clearly impossible to content analyze coverage in all six newspapers for the entire siting procedure. (For Bodega Head alone, for example, this would have meant reading seven years' worth of the *Chronicle* and *Press-Democrat.*) In order to sample meaningfully throughout the history of each plant, a list of critical incidents was drawn up for each case based on the siting procedure and this researcher's knowledge of the events surrounding the proposed siting. For Bodega Head a list of ten incidents was compiled, from PG&E's 1958 announcement that it intended to build some type of plant at that site, to the 1964 AEC objection and subsequent utility withdrawal. For Rancho Seco five incidents were chosen, from 1965 when SMUD first entered into negotiations with the State Power Plant Siting Committee, to late 1968 when the AEC issued the utility a construction permit. Four incidents, from April through June 1970, were selected for Davenport.

Where possible, parallel incidents were selected, but the siting procedure has changed over the years, and some plants have moved farther along than others, so this was not always possible. In all cases the incidents chosen *could* have been made public at the time, and were major decision points in the history of the plant. The incidents chosen for newspaper content analysis were:

Bodega Head (Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat* and San Francisco *Chronicle*)

1–May 23, 1958: PG&E first publicly announces plans to build either a fossil fuel or nuclear plant on the Bodega Head site.
2–April 3, 1959: PG&E announces its intention to build a nuclear power plant somewhere in the nine-county Bay Area, not specifically at Bodega Head.
3–November 19, 1959: The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors grants PG&E a use permit at Bodega Head without a public hearing.
4–October 4, 1961: PG&E applies to the Public Utilities Commission for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for construction of the Bodega Head plant.
5–February 15, 1962: The Army Corps of Engineers holds the first set of public hearings on the proposed plant, concerning the advisability of granting permission to PG&E to construct an access road to the site.
6–March 7-9, 1962: The Public Utilities Commission holds its first set of public hearings on the granting of the certificate of public convenience and necessity.
7–May 21-22, 1962: The Public Utilities Commission holds a second set of public hearings on the granting of the certificate of public convenience and necessity.
8–November 9, 1962: The Public Utilities Commission grants PG&E the certificate of public convenience and necessity, with certain conditions attached.
9–December 28, 1962: PG&E makes application to the AEC for a construction permit for the plant.
10a–October 27, 1964: One arm of the AEC's licensing authority finds that the utility's proposed safety precautions in case of earthquake at the Bodega Head site are insufficient.
10b–October 30, 1964: PG&E withdraws its application for a construction permit from the AEC, terminating its interest in the Bodega Head site.

Rancho Seco (Lodi *News-Sentinel* and Sacramento *Bee*)

1–October 1965: Some time during this month SMUD enters into negotiations with the State Power Plant Siting Committee for an agreement on the Rancho Seco site.
2a–March 31, 1966: SMUD purchases the first parcel of land for the Rancho Seco plant.
2b–April 7, 1966: SMUD makes the first public announcement of its plans to construct a nuclear plant at Rancho Seco.
3–November 16, 1967: SMUD makes application to the AEC for a construction permit for the Rancho Seco plant.
4a–September 16, 1968: The State Power Plant Siting Committee signs an agreement with SMUD on environmental studies to be executed at Rancho Seco.
4b–September 17-18, 1968: The AEC holds a public hearing in Sacramento on the advisability of issuing a construction permit to SMUD for the Rancho Seco plant.
5–October 10, 1968: The AEC issues a construction permit to SMUD for the Rancho Seco plant.

Davenport (Santa Cruz *Sentinel* and San Jose *Mercury*)

1–April 9, 1970:	PG&E announces that it has taken an option to purchase land at the Davenport site with the intent of constructing a nuclear power plant.
2–May 4, 1970:	PG&E enters into negotiations with the State Power Plant Siting Committee for an agreement on the Davenport site.
3–May 19, 1970:	The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors sponsors the first unofficial public information hearing on nuclear power plants.
4–June 23, 1970:	The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors sponsors a second unofficial public information hearing on nuclear power plants.

Seven editions of each paper were coded on either side of the critical incident, along with the edition or editions coinciding with the incident itself. With this method it was hoped to catch articles in advance of the critical incident, plus follow-up stories, editorials, letters, etc. printed after the incident. Since most incidents occurred on a single day, 15 issues were coded in total. Some, however, such as public hearings, added an extra day or two. In all, 156 issues of both the *Chronicle* and *Press-Democrat* were coded; 100 issues of the *Bee* and *News-Sentinel*; and 60 issues of the *Mercury* and *Sentinel.* All editions of each issue (bulldog, home, final, regional, etc.) were examined, since microfilms of the papers include all new and replated pages.

The entire newspaper was coded with the exception of sports, women's, society, comics, obituaries, amusements, and the arts. All advertising material was also coded with the exception of the classified and amusements.

Coders were instructed to count any news story, photo, or advertisement containing, either in the headline, text, or caption, any of the following words, phrases, or their combinations:

nuclear power plant
atomic power plant

radiation standard
radiation level
radiation threshold

electrical blackout or brownout

$$\left.\begin{array}{l}\text{supply}\\ \text{demand}\\ \text{consumption}\\ \text{production}\end{array}\right\}\ \text{of electric power}$$

In addition, all advertisements paid for by an electric utility were coded.

Once an article was identified as relevant to this study, the coder entered on a coding sheet (one per item) such information as the length in column inches of the item, its location, its type (news peg or non-news peg story, editorial, column, ad, or letter), dateline, and credit.

While such categories are satisfactory for determining the quantity of coverage, they say little about quality–what is in the articles themselves. To determine this, a set of 20 "adversary questions" was devised based on this researcher's knowledge of the nuclear debate. They cover the five general areas of controversy over nuclear plants and were meant to be broad enough that even lengthy feature articles could be broken down and coded theme-by-theme. (In this sense, the unit of analysis for coding was the theme.) The five areas covered are: 1) The scientific pros and cons; 2) Aesthetic arguments; 3) Economic arguments; 4) Procedural arguments; and 5) Planning or long-range arguments.

If the coder found one of the 20 adversary questions raised explicitly in the article he was to check the appropriate box. There was no provision for multiple checks of a single theme: either it was, or was not, raised in an article. (To have done otherwise would have necessitated a different unit of analysis, such as the sentence or paragraph, with all the attendant confusion.) After checking a box for the presence of an adversary question, the coder was also to enter beneath it the names of those individuals or groups specifically cited as sources for the information. This permitted determination of the balance between pro-utility and anti-utility sources being quoted.

In the case of letters or editorials, the coder was required to provide a brief, two or three sentence synopsis of the position taken.

(The complete directions to coders and a copy of the coding sheet appear in Appendix V.)

The final coding directions and coding sheet were the result of three preliminary drafts, which were criticized by various members of Stanford Department of Communication and tested for reliability by the two coders. The form and directions settled on produced 93 percent agreement between the two coders on which editions contained articles to be coded; 85 percent agreement on what those articles were; 92 percent agreement in filling out the first part of the coding sheet before the adversary questions; and 81 percent in coding the adversary questions which appear. The formula used in computing the last two figures was: the total number of times the two coders agreed in making an entry on the coding sheet divided by the total number of times entries were made by both coders. For the pretests, two-week periods of the San Francisco *Examiner* surrounding a number of the Bodega Head critical incidents were used, along with a body of articles from the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* which dealt with construction of the Davis-Besse nuclear plant on Lake Erie.

On the basis of the above figures, it was determined that the coding scheme was reliable.

Quantity of Coverage

In total 632 issues of six different newspapers were coded over a 13-year period. On the subject of nuclear power plants, 204 news items, letters, editorials, columns, and advertisements were found, totalling 3,560 column inches (art and headlines included). The raw figures are rather meaningless, except that they indicate the story was one of some news importance. (The definitional net thrown out by the coders pulled in some articles which have been eliminated from these totals because they do not deal even in an auxiliary way with the production of electricity by nuclear power. This includes advertisements by utilities urging purchase of electrical appliances; news items on blackouts caused by utility error; and articles on radiation levels in water and milk caused by fallout from atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. Some of these categories are used later in this report to illustrate other points. But they were eliminated from the totals which follow.)

Table I presents a paper-by-paper breakdown giving the total number of articles coded, column inches, and adversary items; the figures have also been computed for a 14-issue period to make them comparable, since the same number of issues were not coded in each case study.

Table I

Paper	No. Stories/14 Issues		No. Col. In./14 Issues		No. Adver. Items/14 Issues	
Press-Democrat	82	7.4	1,618	145.7	155	13.9
Chronicle	39	3.5	673	60.6	60	5.4
Sentinel	43	10.0	673	156.5	82	19.1
Mercury	22	5.1	347	80.7	46	10.7
News-Sentinel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bee	18	2.5	249	35.1	17	2.4

The table clearly establishes a number of points about the quantity of coverage. The two situations in which there is some citizen opposition–Bodega Head and Davenport–received much more space and coverage of adversary items than did the uncontested Rancho Seco siting. This also means that the activities of PG&E were given more coverage than the activities of SMUD, despite the theory that it is easier for a reporter to get information from a municipal utility than from an IOU.

The Lodi *News-Sentinel* did not cover the Rancho Seco siting at all. Not one word was written about any of the five critical incidents, and nothing was said in general about the production of electric power with nuclear fuel. While it is impossible to say categorically that the Lodi paper ignored Rancho Seco, it was ignored when it would have been of the most interest to readers, and it was ignored continuously over a four-year period. The *Bee* did devote a small amount of space to the plant, but much less space and attention to adversary items than came from the four dailies covering Bodega Head and Davenport.

Further, the small papers in Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz gave more attention to the story than their metro competition, by a margin of about two to one. This ratio is consistent for stories, inches, and adversary items. The ratio of adversary items coded to total column inches is roughly the same for all four papers, indicating that the greater number of adversary items raised by the small papers was a function of the increased space given the subject–and not a result of reporting or writing method.

The superior performance of the small papers over the large is illustrated in Table II, which adds the dimensions of front page articles, bylined articles (staff-written), and letters received and published to the other measures.

Table II

	Three Small Papers	Three Large Papers
Letters	27	6
Bylined Articles	27	10
Front Page Articles	34	11
Total Number of Stories	125	79
Total Number of Column Inches	2,291	1,269
Total Number of Adversary Items Coded	237	123

Given that the Lodi paper contributed nothing to the small papers' totals, the superiority of the Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz performance over that of the metro dailies is even more apparent.

Quality of Coverage: Critical Incidents

Tables III, IV, and V show the performance of each pair of papers, local and metro, in reporting each critical incident. The incidents are arranged in chronological order, the numbers corresponding to the listing of the incidents provided earlier.

Table III

BODEGA HEAD

Incident	Number of Stories		Number of Column Inches		Number of Adversary Items Coded	
	Press-Democrat	Chronicle	Press-Democrat	Chronicle	Press-Democrat	Chronicle
No. 1	2	3	43	34	5	1
No. 2	4	1	69	25	6	0
No. 3	5	0	65	0	7	0
No. 4	1	1	8	3	0	0
No. 5	12	2	263	87	13	5
No. 6	7	5	150	64	22	13
No. 7	13	5	204	108	22	13
No. 8	6	4	263	57	24	7
No. 9	23	7	245	77	33	11
No. 10	9	11	308	218	23	10

Table IV

DAVENPORT

Incident	Number of Stories		Number of Column Inches		Number of Adversary Items Coded	
	Sentinel	Mercury	Sentinel	Mercury	Sentinel	Mercury
No. 1	6	5	164	83	12	8
No. 2	14	4	161	69	21	18
No. 3	9	5	147	86	15	4
No. 4	14	8	201	109	34	16

Table V

RANCHO SECO

Incident	Number of Stories		Number of Column Inches		Number of Adversary Items Coded	
	News-Sentinel	Bee	News-Sentinel	Bee	News-Sentinel	Bee
No. 1	0	2	0	28	0	1
No. 2	0	1	0	57	0	4
No. 3	0	3	0	19	0	1
No. 4	0	9	0	126	0	11
No. 5	0	3	0	19	0	0

The data in Table III for Bodega Head tend to support the hypothesis that early utility activity at a plant site is cloaked in secrecy and receives little news coverage (see Volume One). The dotted line between incidents No. 4 and No. 5 indicates the point at which both papers either recognized the importance of the story; more information became available to report the story more fully; the activity of private citizens in opposition to the plant made the story newsworthy; or, more likely, some combination of these three. The first four incidents–all poorly covered–took place between May 1958 and October 1961. PG&E operated beyond the harsh glare of publicity through the point at which it applied for the certificate of public convenience and necessity from the PUC. *None* of the first four incidents involves a public hearing; *none* involves a public meeting of any sort.

The turning point came in coverage of incident No. 5: the first public hearing on the plant, held by the Army Corps of Engineers in February 1962. From that point all succeeding incidents were well covered. And these incidents involved not only other public hearings, but also the filing of utility applications, PUC decisions, and AEC statements. Again, the performance of the local Santa Rosa paper was superior to that of the *Chronicle* in the areas listed in Table III. The problem common to both papers, however, is that coverage was much poorer early in the siting procedure, and this helps permit the utility to develop a "prior investment" argument for substantiating continuation of the plant siting. It also makes it impossible for the general public to find out what the utility is doing until after many important steps in the siting have been taken. It is also noteworthy that the incident which first occasioned large publicity was a public hearing; this is, of course, a strong argument for public hearings early in the siting procedure.

But Bodega Head is only one case. For Rancho Seco, Table V, there are too few incidents and no trend clear enough to permit drawing any dotted line indicating a change in coverage. But one fact does emerge: the only period in which the *Bee* offered its readers more than three stories or 57 column inches included the AEC-run public hearing over issuance of the construction permit. The period surrounding issuance of the construction permit received the same thin coverage as did the first three years in the history of the plant. It seems likely that incident No. 4 will be the high point of *Bee* coverage until the plant actually begins operation. No other mandatory public hearings remain before issuance of the operating license, and no citizens' group exists in Sacramento to make an issue of it. (Whether this is a function of the news blackout by Lodi and partial brownout by the *Bee* is a difficult question–probably unanswerable categorically. It will come up again in this report.)

As in the Bodega case, press coverage began late in the siting procedure of Rancho Seco; citizen opposition which proved to be relatively ineffective at Bodega never developed in Sacramento; and a public hearing was an important news peg in both cases.

The time frame in the Davenport case is only ten weeks, but already from the data in Table IV it is clear that coverage could be relatively complete. Coverage in all four periods was uniformly strong, with the local *Sentinel* standing out above the *Mercury*. Further, coverage has begun before the land has been purchased for the site and before an agreement has been signed by the utility with the State Power Plant Siting Committee.

Why this early start? First, the plant siting became a political football when a candidate for the

Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors, Phil Harry, accused his incumbent opponent of dealing secretly with PG&E to smooth the way for the plant. Harry actually made the first public announcement of PG&E's plans through a newspaper ad he placed in the *Sentinel* on March 30, 1970, which was also an attack on the secret tactics of his opponent. Thus the plant was kept in the news through the campaign.

(This incident has its parallel at Bodega Head. One of the first actions which upset citizens in that area was the granting of a use permit to the utility by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors without a public hearing, and before the Board knew that the plant was to be nuclear. This political mistake popped up again and again later in the siting procedure and gave plant opponents much publicity mileage.)

Second, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, not as enamoured with the plant as other Boards in other times, scheduled two public forums at which the pros and cons of nuclear power were discussed. Both papers gave much space to covering these forums, and the forums aided in the organization of plant opposition.

If the *Sentinel* and *Mercury* continue their present level of coverage, PG&E will be under greater scrutiny than ever before in the siting of a plant.

Tables III, IV, and V detail coverage appearing during an entire 15-day period around a critical incident. In a number of instances, the critical incident *itself* was not covered by the press, but articles about nuclear power did appear. Thus Tables III through V indicate the flow of coverage from one period to another, but they do not say whether or not the specific critical incident was covered.

Tables VI, VII, and VIII show whether or not a story or stories appeared in each paper giving publicity to the specific critical incident, and whether or not in the week previous to the incident the public was given some sort of advance notice or warning that that incident was likely to occur in the near future. Since coverage has already been quantified for Tables III through V, a "yes" or "no" is sufficient in the following tables to indicate whether a specific incident was covered, and if advance notice was given.

Table VI

BODEGA HEAD

	Reported		Advance Notice Reported	
Incident	Press-Democrat	Chronicle	Press-Democrat	Chronicle
No. 1	Yes	No	No	No
No. 2	Yes	Yes	No	No
No. 3	Yes	No	No	No
No. 4	Yes	Yes	No	No
No. 5	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
No. 6	Yes	Yes	No*	No
No. 7	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
No. 8	Yes	Yes	No	No
No. 9	Yes	Yes	No	No
No. 10a	Yes	Yes	No	No
No. 10b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*The only advance notice given was on the same day as the hearing, and the *Press-Democrat* is an afternoon paper. Thus the notice could not have been of much use.

Table VII
DAVENPORT

Incident	Reported Sentinel	Reported Mercury	Advance Notice Reported Sentinel	Advance Notice Reported Mercury
No. 1	Yes	Yes	No*	No
No. 2	No	No	No	No
No. 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No. 4	Yes	Yes	Yes	No†

*Advance notice of a sort appeared in the ad paid for by Board of Supervisors candidate Phil Harry. But as this was hardly at the initiative of the *Sentinel,* it cannot be considered as the paper's having provided notice.

†The only advance notice given was on the same day as the hearing.

Table VIII
RANCHO SECO

Incident	Reported News-Sentinel	Reported Bee	Advance Notice Reported News-Sentinel	Advance Notice Reported Bee
No. 1	No	No	No	No
No. 2a	No	No	No	No
No. 2b	No	Yes	No	No
No. 3	No	Yes	No	No
No. 4a	No	Yes	No	No
No. 4b	No	Yes	No	Yes
No. 5	No	Yes	No	No

With the exception of the Lodi *News-Sentinel,* the papers *reported* most of the incidents: the Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat* reported them all; the Santa Cruz *Sentinel* and San Jose *Mercury* each missed one; and the San Francisco *Chronicle* and Sacramento *Bee* each missed two. While it would be unwise to infer too much from six omissions, they do have two points in common. The six are:

PG&E first announces it intends to construct a power plant at Bodega Head (*Chronicle*)

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors grants a use permit to PG&E for the Bodega Head site (*Chronicle*)

PG&E enters into negotiations with the State Power Plant Siting Committee for an environmental agreement on the Davenport site (*Sentinel* and *Mercury*)

SMUD enters in negotiations with the State Power Plant Siting Committee for an environmental agreement on the Rancho Seco site (*Bee*)

SMUD purchases the first parcel of land for Rancho Seco (*Bee*)

All these unreported incidents occurred early in the siting procedure; and five of the six involved action initiated by the utility involved.

On providing advance notice, all the papers performed more poorly, with the two local papers in Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz again doing the best job. Eliminating from calculation the Lodi performance, in only eight of 37 incidents was advance notice provided. A pattern is present in these incidents as well:

> Army Corps of Engineers public hearings in Santa Rosa on the utility request to construct an access road to the Bodega plant (*Press-Democrat*)
>
> The second set of public hearings before the PUC on the granting of a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the Bodega plant (*Press-Democrat*)
>
> The decision of PG&E to abandon the Bodega site (*Press-Democrat* and *Chronicle*)
>
> The first public forum in Santa Cruz on the nuclear debate (*Sentinel* and *Mercury*)
>
> The second public forum in Santa Cruz on the nuclear debate (*Sentinel*)
>
> The public hearings in Sacramento before the AEC on the granting of a construction permit to SMUD for Rancho Seco (*Bee*)

Six of the eight involve either public hearings or public meetings. The incident which does not followed the AEC's surprising announcement on the safety of the Bodega site. The public is given no warning whatsoever of future utility actions such as entering negotiations with the State or filing applications with the PUC or AEC. For any party organizing to contest the utility this lack of notice is a great handicap. (Based on personal experience and interview data with other plant opponents in California, it is impossible to get this information from the utility. With proper contacts, it is available in a general way through the government agencies involved, but often the government agencies do not know utility plans, either.)

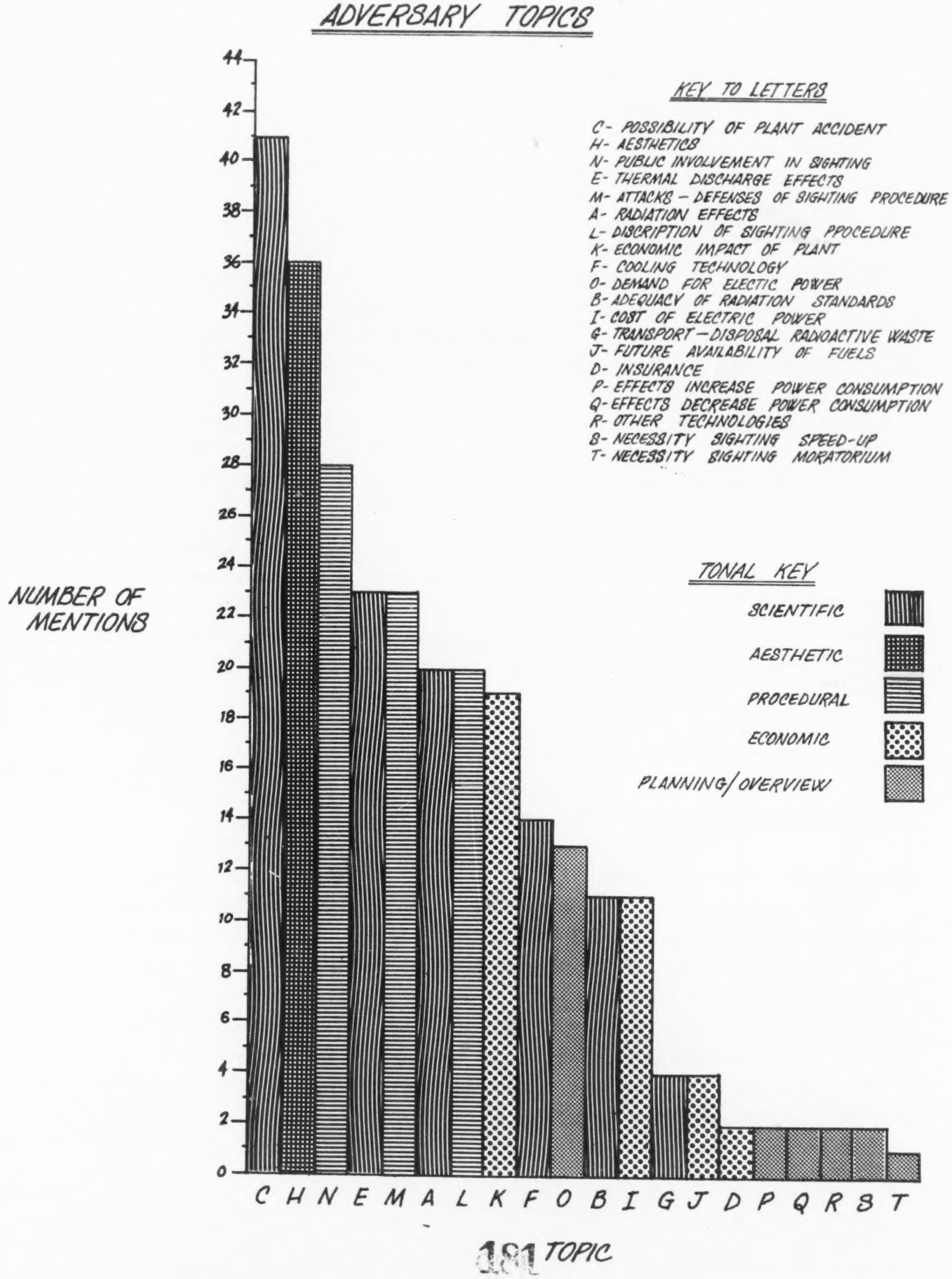
But even the record on providing notice of upcoming hearings is poor. Among the obvious omissions was the *Chronicle*'s neglect of the Army Corps hearings and *both* sets of PUC hearings (which were held in San Francisco); and the *Mercury*'s neglect of the second public forum in Santa Cruz. Even so, without public hearings in the siting procedure, there would be virtually no advance notice of any step in the history of a plant. The utility could manage all the news as it saw fit.

On this dimension measuring the quality of coverage, the two local dailies covering IOUs in challenged situations did the best job; coverage was weakest in the public utility, unchallenged situation.

Quality of Coverage: Adversary Questions

Tables I through V established the correlation between column inches run and adversary questions raised about the plant: those papers which ran more copy also raised some adversary questions more frequently. These figures, however, do not describe which adversary questions are raised, and with what frequency. Table IX displays this dimension of quality.

The vertical axis indicates the total number of times an adversary question was raised in all the six papers (Lodi, of course, contributing none). The particular topic is identified by letter on the horizontal axis. (The question represented by each letter appears in Appendix V, in the second half of the coding sheet.) The 20 adversary questions can be logically divided into five subject areas:


ADVERSARY TOPICS
KEY TO LETTERS
C- POSSIBILITY OF PLANT ACCIDENT
H- AESTHETICS
N- PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN SIGHTING
E- THERMAL DISCHARGE EFFECTS
M- ATTACKS – DEFENSES OF SIGHTING PROCEDURE
A- RADIATION EFFECTS
L- DISCRIPTION OF SIGHTING PPOCEDURE
K- ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PLANT
F- COOLING TECHNOLOGY
O- DEMAND FOR ELECTIC POWER
B- ADEQUACY OF RADIATION STANDARDS
I- COST OF ELECTRIC POWER
G- TRANSPORT – DISPOSAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE
J- FUTURE AVAILABILITY OF FUELS
D- INSURANCE
P- EFFECTS INCREASE POWER CONSUMPTION
Q- EFFECTS DECREASE POWER CONSUMPTION
R- OTHER TECHNOLOGIES
S- NECESSITY SIGHTING SPEED-UP
T- NECESSITY SIGHTING MORATORIUM
TONAL KEY
SCIENTIFIC
AESTHETIC
PROCEDURAL
ECONOMIC
PLANNING/OVERVIEW
NUMBER OF MENTIONS
44
42
40
38
36
34
32
30
28
26
24
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
C H N E M A L K F O B I G J D P Q R S T
TOPIC

1) Scientific–including the effects of radiation on health, the possibility of plant accident, thermal pollution, and cooling technology
2) Economic–including the cost to the customer of electric power from nuclear plants and the effects of the siting on the host community
3) Aesthetic–the physical presence of a plant in a given location
4) Procedural–including attacks and defenses of the siting procedure and a description of that procedure
5) Planning/Overview–including California power needs, the effects of increased power consumption, and reasons for a speed-up or slow-down in the siting of new plants.

The five subject areas have been coded, so that not only is it possible to note which specific questions have received strong or weak press coverage, but also to pick out those areas in which coverage has varied. (It should be noted that the totals in the table represent adversary questions raised in news articles *only*, or 78 percent of the adversary questions coded. A similar chart was also constructed adding in adversary questions coded from letters, editorials, columns, and advertisements, but it did not alter the configuration. The effects of letters and advertisements are discussed elsewhere in this report.)

Not surprisingly, the individual questions of the possibility of a plant accident and the aesthetics problem are the two most often-discussed points of the debate. This is due to the fact that they are two of the more easily understandable problems, and during the Bodega controversy (in the dawn of nuclear power plants) some of the more sophisticated problems were not as well understood as they are today.

What is more interesting about Table IX, however, is the distribution of subject areas. The chart clearly points up that the two areas receiving the least coverage are: economic questions and planning/overview questions. Eight of the bottom ten, and ten of the bottom 14 adversary questions fall into one of these two subject areas.

Why is this so? Given some of the statements earlier in this report, it would not be a likely hypothesis. Science stories and scientific debates are difficult for the daily news media to cover; evidence on many of the scientific points at issue is confusing. The siting procedure is a complex and confusing one which the press has shown no great disposition to track down. Yet points were raised in both of these subject areas with much greater frequency than in economics and planning/overview. Only the high finish of aesthetics is readily understandable.

One of the most, if not *the* most important variable seems to be access to information. In the scientific and procedural categories the utility does not hold a monopoly over available information. Many scientists not in the employ of the utilities are investigating the effects of warmed water on marine biota, and the radiation hazards to plant and animal life. As they reach conclusions, many are willing to speak either directly to the news media or to public forums or in public hearings, which are then reported by the news media. While it is often difficult to compile scientific information on a specific site, the general problems involved are receiving a relatively full airing.

Similarly, the siting procedure is not the monopoly of the utilities. While it is difficult to plot, the public has help from the AEC, the PUC, and some officials in state government.

But in the areas of economics and planning, the utilities hold all the cards. They alone have the experience and manpower to estimate what the use of various fuels in plants of differing design with different methods of cooling will mean to the average customer. They (and their colleagues in the equally tight-lipped oil industry) alone know what the future availability of various types of fuels will be. And they are the organizations best equipped to estimate the full economic impact of siting a plant in a given community. When such issues do find their way into the news media, the utilities are frequently the only source of information (see below), and that information obviously has a bias.

The same is true for the access to information of a planning nature. Siting is a jealously guarded prerogative of the utilities. The California PUC (it was stated to this researcher on numerous occasions) believes it does *not* have a planning jurisdiction. That is best left to the utilities. The PUC is content to react to utility plans, as must all other groups in the state. Federal Power Commission statistics which the utilities frequently cite as the basis of projected future power needs are the same projections the utilities have filed with the FPC. As long as the utilities remain in complete control of planning information, the rest of the public must react to individually proposed plants only (and fight them one by one). Without access to planning information, the public cannot contribute to that planning. It is left to the utility "experts," who have become experts through a monopoly of information.

A second reason for the few adversary topics raised in the planning category is that the press, particularly the daily news media, rarely performs satisfactorily in this regard. Energy policy is hardly the only area of mystery. One reason for the sensation caused in June 1971 by publication of the "Pentagon Papers" by the New York *Times* and other newspapers was the revelations about Vietnam War planning which had been kept from the public over a period of 20 or more years. The auto industry is unwilling to debate the future of the internal combustion engine. The public reacts only to each year's new models. The same can be said of any major industry in the United States.

The adversary questions most frequently raised are precisely those which the utilities are best prepared to rebut on a plant-by-plant basis: the danger of plant accident; thermal effects; the dangers of a radiation leak. The debate over the efficacy and fairness of the siting procedure, as evidenced in the relatively high number of mentions for the procedural category, has had an impact on the utilities. Their highest priority in the 1971 California legislature is passage of a bill which will spell out siting ground rules and eliminate from consideration all objections below the level of a state power plant siting commission. Should this come to fruition, only the aesthetic question would still find the utilities vulnerable, and that they have moved to meet by painting transmission towers green and promising sometime in the dim future the undergrounding of all transmission lines. (Typically, the economic component and planning component of this are a mystery.)

One way in which the press could perhaps improve its performance in reporting economic and planning questions is to run more non-news peg articles on the nuclear debate; that is, articles not tied for their place in the paper to some utility, government, or citizen action or statement, or to the summary of hearings. Yet of 160 news articles coded in the six papers, only 16 (eight in the small papers, eight in the large) were occasioned by a reporter or editor's desire to unearth and present material to expand on the events surrounding the critical incident. In sticking so closely to news-pegged events, the press also became dependent on the most visible and vocal news sources, with predictable results.

Quality of Coverage: Sources of Information on Adversary Questions

While the utilities are successfully orchestrating which adversary questions are being aired, they have had less success in dominating the news column with their viewpoint on those questions. Or put another way–in praise of the press–the dailies analyzed have done a remarkable job presenting both the pro- and anti-nuclear sides of the debate. This may be a function more of the news gathering and traditional "objectivity" institutions of the press than editorial judgments. But the result is the same: of the 12 adversary questions with ten or more total mentions by the six papers, pro and con information sources were quoted about equally on seven.

For each adversary question it is indicated in Table X the total number of times the question was raised, the number of times a pro-nuclear source was cited, and the number of times an anti-nuclear source was cited. Instances in which a neutral source or no source was cited were eliminated.

Table X

Question	Total Number Mentions	Number Pro-Plant Sources	Number Anti-Plant Sources
A	20	11	10
B	11	9	4
C	41	26	29
D	2	0	2
E	23	11	16
F	14	7	4
G	4	1	3
H	*36*	*9*	*29*
I	*11*	*12*	*1*
J	4	1	3
K	*19*	*18*	*6*
L	20	0	0
M	*23*	*8*	*28*
N	28	2	5
O	*13*	*11*	*2*
P	2	1	2
Q	2	0	1
R	2	1	0
S	2	0	0
T	1	0	0

The italicized figures of Table X are those where a significant difference ($p < .10$) exists between the number of pro and con sources quoted in news articles on nuclear power plants. Given the interpretation put on previous data, none of the differences are surprising and all are predictable. The utility or pro-plant case dominates on the costs of nuclear power to the consumer (economics); the economic benefits to be realized by the site community from the plant (economic); and the future power needs of California (planning/overview). The anti-plant case dominates on the question of aesthetics; and in attacks and defenses of the siting procedure (procedural). The results were the same for both large and small papers, although the cell sizes were generally too small to be of value.

Strategically, these results suggest that plant opponents concentrate on marshalling evidence to refute utility arguments on electricity costs, economic benefits from the plant, and state power needs. Utility executives should avoid the aesthetics argument where possible (since they have been unable to come up with many newsworthy responses to opponents on this issue), and work to make the siting procedure either more democratic or even more insulated from the public. On the siting procedure, the utilities are following the latter course of action. The aesthetics question will likely cause them serious public relations problems in light of their commitment to such coastal sites as Davenport and Pt. Arena.

Advertising

Readers of *Newsweek* and other national magazines with regional editions may recall seeing multicolored, two page advertisements, paid for by PG&E, discussing the benefits of nuclear power. While the utilities have spent large amounts of money on newspaper advertising, they have not carried over this approach to papers in areas where plants have been proposed.

In the 632 issues of the six newspapers coded, 54 ads were found which were either paid for by the utilities or by a group opposing siting of a plant. But of the 54, only two dealt directly with the nuclear power question, and both of those were paid for by non-utility people in Santa Cruz (and appeared in the *Sentinel*). PG&E ran only one ad even marginally related to a siting–that in the *Chronicle* detailing the utility's contributions to the community, including that of job creator. SMUD ran no ads even remotely connected with the Rancho Seco plant in the periods surveyed.

The other 51 ads coded, all paid for by the utilities and totalling 3,668 column inches, urged readers to purchase color television sets, heat with electricity, switch to electric clothes dryers, and the like. These ads outstripped by 108 column inches all the space devoted in the news columns and editorial pages of the six papers to nuclear power plants. It is sobering to consider that the utilities can, and did, purchase more newspaper space to create a demand for the electricity to be produced from nuclear and fossil fuel plants than editors found available for informing the public.

Nearly two-thirds of those advertising column inches were placed with the three large papers (2,368 inches to 1,300 inches in the small papers). It will come as a disappointment to conspiracy theorists to learn, however, that there was no discernible pattern to the advertising correlated to events in the siting procedure. All but one of the utility ads, however, appeared in the *Chronicle, Bee, News-Sentinel* (which did not refuse ads even though it did not cover the nuclear debate or the Rancho Seco siting), and *Press-Democrat.* Only one PG&E ad appeared in the eight weeks of the *Mercury* surveyed, and none appeared in the *Sentinel.*

While traditional advertising has been shunned as a technique by the utilities, they have not relied entirely on news columns for publicity. Other public relations methods have been used:

1) Early in the Bodega siting, PG&E took members of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on a junket to the small Humboldt nuclear plant, then under construction. Reaction of the supervisors was very

favorable (largely on economic grounds of what the plant would mean for the tax rate in Sonoma County) and much valuable newspaper publicity was generated for the utility.

2) PG&E has outfitted a van with educational materials about nuclear power which swings through shopping centers and other gathering spots in host communities.

3) The utilities have a number of full-time employees who speak regularly on the chicken and peas circuit to Rotarians, Kiwanis, JayCees, and other community groups. Often these speeches on nuclear power were covered by the papers surveyed and invariably proved to be excellent forums for the utility case. Plant opponents cannot hope to compete with the utilities in this type of public relations, since most opponents have other full-time jobs which do not permit such active lobbying. But when plant opponents did call press conferences in which their views were unopposed by utility spokesmen, the resulting newspaper articles were as powerful as the utility luncheon speeches.

4) Both PG&E and SMUD have visitors' bureaus at their plants under construction or in operation (one exists at Rancho Seco), at which nuclear power is explained.

5) PG&E has provided papers such articles as "Fish Prefer Power Plants" (which extolled the virtues of heated water). This article was run by the *Sentinel* on its outdoors page. But this was the only example of an article readily identifiable as puff from the utilities which was coded.

6) The orchestration of public relations techniques to "blitz" a community has been complained of frequently by plant opponents (who, admittedly, have a bias of their own and would also blitz the community with their viewpoint if they had the resources. The problem is that they do not–and they never do.) Harold Miossi, a leading opponent in the unsuccessful fight to defeat a siting by PG&E at Diablo Canyon, described the blitz in San Luis Obispo County in a letter to PG&E attorney Arthur Hillman. The tactics were "based on obscuring issues with massive doses of propaganda on [the plant's] safety (not proved); its tax benefits (different from the line fed the State Board of Equalization); the specter of power shortages (no word of PG&E's gigantic sales efforts); and expense-free posh junkets for government and civic leaders . . .

"One does not have to accept my account of this public relations effort. One can learn of it from the comments of PG&E public relations officer Fritz Draeger, who at a Theonetics North conference (Madonna Inn, 1969) boastfully referred to this propaganda blitz as one of the most successful selling ventures ever conducted, anywhere. In substance, he related how PG&E top brass decided not to duplicate the Bodega fiasco, and immediately upon selecting Diablo as their new site, directed a public relations effort of massive proportions to center on San Luis Obispo County. By design, the softening up effort was not only to make the plant accepted–but wanted; it focused first on opinion leaders: government and civic bodies, legislators, prominent citizens, all of whom once converted would, in domino fashion, propel the movement. By Mr. Draeger's account, the tempo reached a crescendo shortly before the PUC hearing; at this stage PG&E undertook sampling in this county, and then in other areas of the state not saturated with 'information.' This sampling, according to Draeger, showed the success of the brainwashing: substantially less fear of proximity to a nuclear reactor and substantially more desire to have the plant in this county. As a witness to this affair, I find myself in total agreement with Mr. Draeger that it was, indeed, a classic."[3]

In Santa Cruz, PG&E has already conducted a base line study of community attitudes to determine those issues of greatest resistance; begun romancing civic officials and opinion leaders; and started speaking on the banquet circuit. An important variable, however, is performance of the *Sentinel,* which thus far compares favorably with performance of the *Press-Democrat* in Santa Rosa.

7) An aspect of press coverage which works to the public relations advantage of the utilities is the fascination for stories about power failures and blackouts–even those far from home. Not counting the myriad power failure stories which appeared in the sample as a result of rainstorms, 11 blackout stories were coded, with datelines from such unlikely places as Tijuana, Cleveland, Ohio, and Nebraska. It is hard to understand why these stories receive such coverage. One result of this preoccupation is that when utility executives sound the alarms about potential brownouts and blackouts if they do not get their way, the messages fall on receptive ears.

Quality of Coverage: Editorial Policy and Letters

Only seven editorials appeared in the six papers on the subject of nuclear power or the production of electricity. None appeared in the Lodi or Santa Cruz papers. With the exception of the *Chronicle,* however, all the papers approved of the construction of the nuclear plant in their area. Editorials were coded which stated this in the *Bee, Mercury,* and *Press-Democrat*; and questionnaire data (discussed later) confirmed the same for the *Sentinel* and *News-Sentinel.* The *Chronicle* did not say much about the plant editorially until the unfavorable AEC report, when it editorialized that PG&E ought not construct the plant because of the danger of earthquake.

In the Davenport and Bodega cases for all four papers, given the balance of sources quoted, the amount of space devoted to the subject, and the willingness to cover statements and activities of plant proponents and opponents alike, it does not seem that editorial policy was greatly distorting news coverage. The numbers of letters printed in these papers about the plant also indicates the even hand of editors. Table XI displays the breakdown of letters printed according to the position of the writer.

Table XI

Paper	Number of Letters Printed	Pro Plant	Anti Plant	Neutral
Press-Democrat	15	5	9	1
Chronicle	6	1	4	1
Sentinel	12	5	6	1
Mercury	0	0	0	0
News-Sentinel	0	0	0	0
Bee	0	0	0	0

Of the 204 items coded in this study, 33, or 16 percent, were letters. Of the 360 adversary questions coded, 61, or 17 percent, came from letters. Some 57 times in the 33 letters the respondent stated his or her case on one of the 20 adversary questions: 48 were anti-plant, and only nine were pro-plant. As the table points out, most of the letters were printed in the *Sentinel* and *Press-Democrat,* the two small papers in challenged situations which have done the best job of coverage. The *Bee* and *News-Sentinel,* which essentially blacked out the story, ran no letters. This indicates the possibility of a close inter-relationship between press coverage and citizen interest.

Letters played an important part in the history of the Bodega siting. After the first public hearing before the PUC, at which plant opponents made a poor showing, conservationist Karl Kortum, who opposed the plant, wrote a lengthy letter to the *Chronicle* in which he outlined his reasons for opposition to the plant. It was run March 14, 1962 (24 inches), and its impassioned tone led to the barrage of letters to the PUC which occasioned a second set of public hearings.

Pressure from the late Congressman Clem Miller (in whose district the Bodega plant would have been) was necessary to force the Army Corps of Engineers into holding a public hearing on PG&E's request to build an access road. The *Press-Democrat* had argued editorially that a public hearing was not necessary and that it would slow up the utility in its plans; Miller was criticized for meddling. He replied with an eloquent letter (Feb. 12, 1962, 29 inches) on the need for public hearings and the responsibility of a newspaper in encouraging open decisions. The letter undoubtedly educated many Santa Rosa residents on their rights before government bodies, which would prove valuable throughout the Bodega battle.

In sum, editorial policy did not seem to bias coverage of hearings, speeches, meetings, and the other surface events in the Bodega and Davenport cases. The silence of the *Bee* and *News-Sentinel* is certainly consistent with their pro-plant positions, since it is difficult for opposition to coalesce without a newspaper willing to function as a community forum. Whether this was by conscious design of the editors is impossible to say–but it was most fortunate for SMUD.

Bodega is a lesson to plant opponents that the letters-to-the-editor section is one of the few territories not controlled by the utilities. The letter is a weapon which could be more fruitfully exploited; the high volume of letters the *Sentinel* has already published on this subject promises a spirited debate in Santa Cruz.

Quality of Coverage: The Press-Democrat

Numbers and tables by themselves cannot do full justice to describing the quality of coverage in the six papers under study, particularly the exemplary coverage of the *Press-Democrat*. This small paper, despite its editorial position, and despite all the difficulties inherent in reporting the siting story, did an excellent job of informing its community about the activities of PG&E, plant opponents, the PUC, and the AEC. Some further dimensions of its performance are worth exploring.

The *Press-Democrat* was the only paper to develop a specialist on the subject, who personally reported most of the critical incidents from 1960 on. The byline of Don Engdahl generally signified a well-researched, even-handed piece of work. His editors gave him excellent space and location.

When the PUC issued the certificate of public convenience and necessity to PG&E, the *Press-Democrat* ran almost the entire opinion, spread out over three pages and 168 column inches. That issue (November 11, 1962) also devoted 34 more inches to the story. By contrast, the *Chronicle*, with a much larger news hole, gave the story 15 inches.

In another New York *Times*-like move, the *Press-Democrat* then devoted 43 inches to covering a meeting of plant opponents at which the PUC decision was criticized.

In early January 1963, the paper gave front-page space to hearings in Washington, D.C. on the safety of the nuclear reactornear Detroit (Enrico Fermi plant–an experimental breeder reactor), which had experienced some accidents in operation. The final safety testing of PG&E's Humboldt Bay plant was also reported. These instances show that the editors were dedicated to the publishing of material related to their local experience.

Engdahl has an excellent grasp of the chaotic siting procedure, and he was given space to outline in detail what the AEC hearings (which never came) would be like: who could participate, where, when, and why. Stories in which individuals were quoted either attacking or defending the siting procedure appeared in the other papers, but never was reporter time devoted to researching that procedure. As a consequence, readers in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Santa Cruz had, and have, no knowledge of how the utility goes about siting a plant. This is the first requirement for successful and meaningful intervention.

Numbers alone do not do full justice to the *Mercury* coverage, either. The paper has run stories on the Davenport plant almost exclusively in the regional one-star and two-star editions which circulate only in the Santa Cruz area. On one level this makes sense: Santa Cruz people are more interested than San Jose people in the plant. However, the power the plant will produce is destined for a San Jose market; should an accident occur San Jose residents would be affected too. Much of the *Mercury* material reads like rewrites of the *Sentinel,* and if this is indeed the case, then the paper is simply repeating coverage for readers of both papers. It seems that if the *Mercury,* as a metropolitan paper, feels the plant story is important, it has the responsibility to tell *all* of its readers about it. At the present time it is contributing little new information to new readers on the plant, and its unwillingness to report for the San Jose audience is making it impossible for plant opponents in Santa Cruz to spread their message beyond the city limits.

Finally, none of the papers surveyed, with the exception of the *Press-Democrat,* has made the logical connections between stories appearing at different times but all speaking to the same problem: energy. Tom Harris, the *Mercury*'s environmental writer, interviewed Sierra Club lobbyist John Zierold on the need to protect the California coast from the utilities and their power plants, yet he failed to even mention that this was at the heart of the controversy in Davenport, just a few miles from San Jose. On its business page, the *Chronicle* regularly ran PG&E hand-outs on available power reserves, yet the necessity for a plant at Bodega was never questioned. It was as if the two were not related. This is a serious problem for the news media on all sorts of subjects, not just power plant siting, and only heightened editorial awareness and commitment can solve it.

Bodega Head, Rancho Seco, Davenport: Some Conclusions

It is inescapable that the most crucial variable determining quality of coverage in these three cases was active citizen opposition. Press coverage and opposition fed on one another, the opposition providing additional news pegs for stories, and the press acting as a forum in which the fight could be waged. Given that the preponderance of coverage was event-pegged (to such as public meetings, hearings, press conferences, and statements), it is essential that some recognized opposition spokesman be formed to head off utility control of the information channels. This is what was lacking at Rancho Seco. Both the *Bee* and *News-Sentinel* supported the plant, and neither felt impelled to present the nuclear debate without a community controversy (a traditional and accepted journalism ethic) so the resulting coverage was one-sided and thin—in the case of Lodi, nonexistent.

Distance from the plant site is a second important variable. In the Bodega and Davenport cases it was the paper at the scene which did the best reporting job. And even in the Rancho Seco case, the *Bee,* which out-performed the *News-Sentinel,* is much closer geographically to that site than are either the *Chronicle* or *Mercury* to their respective sites. Thus the question of "whose story is it?" is an important one.

Utility domination of the siting procedure and the news to come from it is a constant. The press uniformly begins coverage relatively late in the game; has difficulty reporting (in a balanced fashion) advance planning and the economics of a site; can provide *only* advance notice of public events without a great deal of investigative work into utility plans; and is generally at the mercy of the utilities and plant opponents for information. The utilities, acting like any other private businesses, release and publicize only that information which will aid in realization of their plans, and they have skilled public relations staffs to accomplish what manipulation of information cannot.

Even for unorganized opponents, the letters-to-the-editor section can be an important forum of communication. Plant supporters tend not to write letters (or at least letters that are printed), and this section of the coverage tends to be overwhelmingly anti-utility. The amount of letter-writing, however, is in part dependent on the volume of news coverage of the subject, as the Rancho Seco data show.

With only three cases, it is impossible to say anything about the general improvement in coverage of this subject over time, particularly since the beginning of the environmental information explosion in mid-1969. It is also impossible to say anything about the representativeness of these Northern California findings. While editorial position of the paper does not seem to be a good predictor of the quality of coverage, this judgment also requires more evidence.

The National Picture

California is not the only state in which nuclear power is clearly destined to replace the fossil fuels in firing electric plants. Nuclear plants are in operation in 12 states, including California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, and Pennsylvania, and they are planned to operate in 19 other states. Only parts of the Southwest and the Big Sky country have not been touched by the nuclear dilemma.

In order to gain a national perspective on nuclear power plants and the press, three mail questionnaires were prepared for the groups under study in this report. Based on information available from the AEC and various citizens' groups opposed to nuclear plants, a list was composed in May 1971 of *all* sites for the plants—those operating, under construction, and planned (to the point that a definite site had been selected). Also included were those sites which have been abandoned by utilities under pressure from government or citizens' groups (such as Bodega Head). Many utilities have more than one such plant in their systems, and some of the sites have more than one generating unit on them. In all, 75 sites are on the list.

One form of the questionnaire was sent to the editor of the nearest daily to the plant site, and a news executive of the nearest metropolitan paper. The same criteria in selecting the papers were applied as in the Northern California case studies. In a few instances, the plants are so remotely sited that only one paper was near enough to merit a questionnaire; and in other instances, particularly in the Northeast where many nuclear plants are located in a small geographic area, an alternate paper was selected in preference to one already queried about another site. For metropolitan papers, the questionnaire was usually sent to the managing editor, a news executive familiar with day-to-day operations and part of the policy-making structure of a paper. For the small papers, the questionnaire was most often sent directly to the editor. Each mailed request contained an extra questionnaire which the news executives were invited to give to any other staff member who they felt could provide additional information on this subject. Questionnaires were sent to 72 executives of metropolitan papers, and 69 editors of small dailies.

A second questionnaire was sent to either the chief officer or vice president for public relations of each utility (both public and private) involved in the construction of a nuclear plant. Where two utilities were sharing the costs, and the resulting power, from a plant, both were queried. No extra questionnaires were included in this mailing. Fifty IOU executives and ten public utility officers were polled.

The third form of the questionnaire was sent to 41 opponents of the construction of various nuclear plants all over the nation. This was a list compiled from many sources, including Larry Bogart, publisher of "Watch on the AEC," a national publication for anti-nuclear forces, and Elise Jerrard and Elizabeth Hogan of the Independent Phi Beta Kappa Study Group in New York City, which also disseminates information nationally against the plants. Unfortunately, not all plants known to be challenged (or to have been challenged) could be matched with at least one reliable name and address of a challenger. And for some plants more than one name was available. Thus the list of those opponents queried is rather haphazard. The only criterion was availability–and therefore prominence. Two extra copies of the questionnaire were included in this mailing.

The material covered in the three forms of the questionnaire was approximately the same. Respondents were asked to comment on:

1) The importance of the nuclear story
2) The nature of coverage
3) Utility-press-opponent relations
4) Editor attitudes toward extension of access laws to cover utilities
5) Advertising about nuclear power
6) The effects of press coverage on utility plans for the plant
7) The role of the citizen in decision-making for the plant
8) The role of a newspaper in reporting the nuclear debate.

Wherever possible, questions were phrased in a parallel manner to permit cross-group comparison of responses. Copies of the three questionnaires appear in Appendix V.

All materials were mailed June 7, 1971, and replies received through July 15 were accepted. Due to time and cost factors, plus an excellent response rate, only one mailing was undertaken. The rate of return for each group was:

Newspaper executives (metro): 33 of 72, or 45.8 percent
Newspaper executives (local): 37 of 69, or 53.6 percent
Total for newspaper executives: 70 of 141, or 49.6 percent

Utility executives (IOU): 31 of 50, or 62.0 percent
Utility executives (public): 6 of 10, or 60.0 percent
Total for utility executives: 37 of 60, or 61.6 percent

Opponents of IOU-built plants: 23 of 38, or 60.5 percent
Opponents of public utility-built plants: 4 of 5, or 80.0 percent
Total for opponents: 27 of 43, or 62.8 percent

(Of the 75 nuclear sites, 64 are property of IOUs, and 35 of these have been challenged. Only 11 of the sites are property of public utilities, and four have met with a challenge. The small number of cases involving public utilities limits what can be said about attitudes of news executives covering their activities, opponents, and utility managers.

(Only those plants were considered "challenged" which have been opposed by an organized group of citizens with a mailing address in the area of the plant. Appendix V indicates which of the 75 sites were challenged as of June 1971. This is a very fluid situation with new challenges occurring frequently. During the course of this research alone, the number of IOU plants being challenged jumped from 33 to 35. Since utility executives and editors filled out questionnaires about a specific plant site at approximately the same time, it is assumed that both were aware of the status of the plant at that time.)

Quantity of Coverage Nationally: Some General Observations

In the absence of a detailed content analysis such as appeared earlier, it is a risky business to attempt an assessment nationally of coverage of the nuclear dilemma. Editors were asked to indicate how important a story for their community they felt it was, and 71.6 percent answered that it was "very important, meriting large news play," and another 25.4 percent stated it was "of above-average importance, meriting moderate news play." Utility executives concurred: 62.2 percent stated it was a very important story, and 32.4 percent felt it was of above-average importance. As impressive as these figures are, however, they must be taken with a grain of salt. The replies of a number of the California papers do not accord with reality–or at least this researcher's perception of reality. Some editors who stated that the story merited large news play, and that they had the facilities to cover the story, did not seem to follow through. (This indicates the shortcomings of any mail questionnaire and should serve as a warning in the interpretation of data.)

Editors were asked to enclose clips of articles from their papers on nuclear power, and from those who did it is possible to conclude that in many parts of the country the subject is indeed receiving a thorough airing. The Cincinnati *Enquirer* ran a special 12-page section (with no advertisements) on nuclear power which was the product of ten months of research. The Portland *Oregonian* ran a 26,000 word series on nuclear power and the environment, for which it received the Atomic Industrial Forum Award. The Milwaukee *Journal* presented a "Power to the People" series of non-news peg stories detailing the debate. The Providence *Bulletin* has devoted 65 articles in the last year alone to the Rome Point plant, and the Huntsville *Times,* which maintains that it broke the story of TVA's nuclear plans for Alabama, ran a six-part series on atomic power. Nor have only the metro papers been active. The Pottstown (Penn.) *Mercury* ran a special section on the Limerick plant of the Philadelphia Electric Company. And perhaps the most famous of all newspaper treatments of the issue to date was done by a small paper–the Eugene (Ore.) *Register-Guard.* That paper's investigative reporter, the late Gene Bryerton, detailed the nuclear plans of the Eugene Water and Electric Board (a public utility) in a series of articles which were published in 1970 as a Friends of the Earth/Ballantine Book entitled *Nuclear Dilemma.* In a May 1970 referendum on whether or not the plant should be constructed, the citizens of Eugene voted a three-year moratorium. A utility spokesman in Oregon credits the Bryerton series in the *Register-Guard* with helping bring about defeat of the plant.

The environmental information explosion which began in 1969 has also likely influenced the amount of coverage. Many of the citizen-challenges to plants have come within the last two years, and as they have created the news pegs and the demand for information, the press has responded.

The Composite (Modal) Editor

Taken as a group, the 67 news executives who responded present a rather consistent picture in their stated attitudes. (The marginals in percent appear on the editor form of the questionnaire in Appendix V; replies of three newspaper executives indicated that the papers did not cover the story, or were unable to provide answers to the questions.)

As noted before, the composite editor states that the story is important, and he is willing to run a special series of in-depth articles in covering it (74.6 percent). He believes the story is his to cover, with only 17.9 percent admitting they do not have the facilities (usually manpower and time) to cover it, and 18.8 percent offering the name of another paper better equipped to report the story.

He is likely to assign a general assignment writer to the story (nearly 75 percent did), but there is also a strong tendency to put a specialist to work. Nearly 40 percent assigned environment, science, political, medical, suburban, resources, and power experts to the story.

Because of the varying siting procedures in the 31 states involved, it is difficult to say when he started covering the story, but a plurality of the editors (44.7 percent) waited until the utility itself announced plans. Only 20.9 percent stated that coverage began before the utility had purchased land. And only one, an executive of the Huntsville *Times*, took credit for breaking the story.

The composite editor stated that his staff had *no* trouble getting complete information about siting and construction plans from the utility (73.1 percent), but despite that, in the tradition of pushing for ever-widening access to information, he stated that extension of open meeting and open record legislation to cover the utility *would* help his staff (59.7 percent), and that he would support such an extension of the laws (73.1 percent).

Despite his belief that the story is an important one, the likelihood is only fifty-fifty that the editor took an editorial position on the plant (47.7 percent did, and 47.7 percent did not). But if he did take a position, it was most likely in favor of the plant. Of 32 news executives who stated their papers did take a position, 25 approved utility plans, six were opposed, and one failed to indicate what his stand had been.

He received letters from his readers about the plant (80.6 percent), an average or greater than average number to have received given the editor's knowledge of the community. He probably did not increase his ad revenue as a result of construction of the nuclear plant–only 37.3 percent reported either the utility or the opposition advertising its views on the nuclear debate.

He believes his coverage would be judged by utility executives and opponents alike as "fair and balanced" (77.6 percent in assessing utility opinion, 70.1 percent in predicting opponent opinion); but not one executive stated that the utility would rate his coverage "pro-utility," and similarly, not one executive stated that the opponents would rate coverage "anti-utility."

Surprisingly, he believes that the manner in which he covered the issue had no direct or indirect effect on utility plans for the plant (67.1 percent), but he still believes it is his obligation to develop in his pages the nuclear debate, "regardless of whether or not there is an organized citizens' effort against it" (70.1 percent). On the role his citizen-readers should play in the decision-making process on nuclear plants he is unclear: more than a third assigned some sort of activist role to the public, and only 15 percent felt the public had no role to play. But the rest resorted to bursts of editorial rhetoric in sidestepping the question—an admittedly hot one.

The overall picture—not a surprising one—is of an editor on good terms with local utility officials, cognizant of the nationwide debate over nuclear power and willing to cover it to whatever extent possible in his community, given his resources. He believes he is fairly powerless to affect utility plans, and he is not sure what the average citizen should do, either. His coverage has been down-the-middle, fair to both sides. But he has editorially either approved utility plans or avoided taking a firm position.

The Composite (Modal) Utility Executive

The marginals for responses from the 37 utility executives (see the utility executive form of the questionnaire in Appendix V) provide a picture of an executive holding views quite similar to those of the newspaper editor. He agrees (94.6 percent) that the story is of above average or greater importance to his customers, and therefore deserving of large or moderate news play.

He believes that many papers in the vicinity of the site, including the nearest local paper, the metro papers, the papers in the utility's headquarter city, and even some weeklies near the plant site, have done an excellent job of coverage (67.5 percent), and he believes that the press in general has been "active" or "very active" in soliciting information about the plant from the utility (56.8 percent). Only 10.8 percent of the utility executives felt that the press had been "passive" in this regard. As a consequence, he feels that existing press-utility relations are adequate to informing the public of utility plans (78.4 percent).

He agrees with the editor that coverage has been fair and balanced (76.5 percent), although two utility executives did state that they felt the press had reported affairs in a pro-utility manner. Seven, however, felt that the press had been anti-utility. But these are minority views. The utility executive agrees that press coverage had no direct or indirect effect on utility plans (75.7 percent).

On the questions of citizen participation in the siting procedure and the role of the press in developing the nuclear debate there is some difference of opinion between utility and newspaper executives. The utility executive is less willing to accord the citizen an activist role: 51.4 percent stated that their average electricity customer has *no* role to play in decision-making; and only 10.8 percent adopted what could be termed a position advocating citizen activism. On the role of the press they are split down the middle, with 45.9 percent stating the press should develop the nuclear debate, even in the absence of citizen opposition, and 45.9 percent stating the opposite.

The overall response was one of general approval of press performance in reporting the nuclear debate. The utility executives do not feel major changes are needed in press-utility relations (they were not asked specifically about extension of access laws in the belief that such a question would have hurt the response rate and forced respondents into a defensive position). They are less willing to find a role for citizens in decision-making than are editors, and not as convinced that the press should tackle the whole subject without citizen opposition.

The Composite (Modal) Plant Opponent

As expected, the 23 plant opponents who responded are not so sanguine about press performance or utility openness. (The replies of four opponents indicated that they did not read either of the daily newspapers queried about the site they were opposing. Therefore their replies were dropped out of the total, leaving 23 respondents.) Their answers to parallel questions show that the realtively similar responses of editors and utility executives do not present a full or entirely accurate picture of press coverage and access to information.

In general, the plant opponent agrees that the press has devoted space to the local siting. (The marginals in percent appear on the opponent form of the questionnaire in Appendix V.) At least one daily paper read by an opponent (86.9 percent) was said to have run, at fairly regular intervals, articles describing progress on the plant. The opponent adds that the papers he reads also ran in-depth series on nuclear power (52.1 percent). The press has provided advance notice of upcoming public hearings and public meetings making it possible for a citizen to participate (73.9 percent). The opponent's estimate of when coverage of the siting was started accords with the editor's view: a plurality (43.4 percent) believe it started when the utility itself first announced its plans.

On the matter of getting information from the utility, the opponent parts company with the editor: he is having trouble (82.6 percent).

While the press has sought out his group for comment on the plant (56.5 percent), he feels that the case "for" the plant has been made more strongly than the case "against" (52.1 percent to 8.7 percent). He rates newspaper coverage as biased pro-utility (56.5 percent to 40.4 percent found it fair and balanced, and 8.7 percent rated it biased anti-utility).

The opponent, perhaps because of his own activism, believes that the quality of press coverage *does* have an impact on utility plans (56.5 percent). He obviously believes the public should play an active role in decision-making, with 60.9 percent stating that citizens should either be provided a referendum, yes/no vote on the plant; be placed on the commissions which have veto power over a site; or be permitted to act as intervenors at hearings.

The opponent thinks the press has the obligation to develop the nuclear debate (91.2 percent), but he does not believe that such coverage has been the cause for the formation of citizens' groups opposing the plant. (In only one situation did the respondent indicate that press coverage had led to the formation of an opposition group. Forty-seven and eight-tenths percent stated that their opposition had led to press coverage, and 30.4 percent stated that, as far as they could tell, there was no relation between the formation of opposition and press coverage.)

In sum, the composite opponent feels the press is siding with the utility in its coverage; has a higher opinion of the potency of the press for influencing utility decisions; believes the press has an obligation to develop debate over the plant, although coverage has not led to his own activism; and is having difficulty getting information from the utility. (Responses on all three forms were received from all parts of the country, from IOUs and public utilities, metropolitan and local papers, in challenged and unchallenged situations. There is no reason to believe that the group of non-respondents differs significantly in viewpoint from those who did respond, and whose replies make up the composite pictures. It therefore seems safe to generalize the findings from the 133 who replied to the 244 who were queried.)

While each group presents a united front on a number of questions, there were differences in replies which can be sorted out according to a number of variables. For newspaper editors these include whether or not the plant being covered is challenged or unchallenged; whether the paper is a metro or a local daily; and whether the company whose activities are being reported is an IOU or a public utility. For utility executives two important variables are whether the plant is challenged, and whether the company is an IOU or public utility. The latter also applies to opponents, but the public utilities build so few nuclear plants, and so few of them are challenged, that not enough opponents of such plants could be queried to permit comparison with opponents of plants constructed by IOUs.

As indicated, the replies of opponents differed greatly in some respects from the replies of editors and utility executives. This is in part due, no doubt, to the different perspective and orientation of the opponents. But also, the opponents were replying to the questions based on their knowledge of press and utility behavior in *challenged* situations only. It is possible that part of the reason for their different replies is rooted in the fact that editors and utility executives in challenged situations act differently from those in unchallenged situations. This was one of the possibilities examined in comparing responses within a single group—and while the size of the paper involved and the ownership structure of the utility *did* prove important on a few points, the challenge, or absence of it, proved to be the most interesting variable.

The Effects on Editors and Utility Executives of a Plant Challenge

In three respects, a challenge to a plant is likely to increase the amount of material appearing in the paper on the subject of nuclear power. First, editors of papers in challenged situations were more likely to reply that they received *some* letters from readers on the subject of nuclear power, and they were also more likely to reply that the number they received was above average or very large for the community. (The chi square test of independence on 2x2 and 3x2 contingency tables was used to determine significant differences. All differences reported are significant at the .05 level, unless otherwise indicated in the text.) Absolute values are provided for those questions on which a significant difference appeared on any of the three intragroup comparisons in Appendix V. The answers of opponents support this, as 95.6 percent stated that the papers in their area ran letters to the editor on nuclear power. Of the 22 who reported that letters were run, ten stated they were run in approximately equal numbers for and against the plan; seven stated that they were run in unequal numbers, and five said that letters *against* the plant predominated.

Second, both editors and utility executives in a challenged situation were more likely to state that they received advertising, or that they placed advertising, with a message about nuclear power. The replies of opponents support this also: 65.2 percent stated that the utility they were challenging in their area advertised its views on nuclear power. By contrast, 30.4 percent said they were also able to advertise. In no instance did an opponent report that his group was able to advertise as much as the utility; the most frequent reason given for the absence of opponent advertising was lack of money—not desire.

A number of utility executives, both challenged and unchallenged, pointed out that they communicate with the public in many ways other than paid advertising. The response of one challenged, east coast IOU is typical:

> Our nuclear public relations program is a many-faceted one. We have converted a ferry boat into an information center and it has drawn more than 100,000 visitors. We have an information trailer, a speakers' bureau . . . We have produced a movie. We work closely with the press, especially environmental writers, and with governing bodies and regulatory agencies, as well. We have produced booklets, news stories, magazine articles, and ads.

Opponents claim that in addition to the above techniques, the utilities have attempted to pressure news executives in challenged situations into coloring the news the utility's way. Roldo Bartimole, former Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reporter who now edits a basement journalism review in that city, reports that "pressure" has been mounting on P-D editor Thomas Vail and managing editor Ted Princiotto from Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company (CEI) former board chairman Ralph Besse. CEI is constructing a nuclear plant (Davis-Besse) in cooperation with Toledo Edison near Oak Harbor, Ohio. Bartimole states Besse "had a private meeting with *Plain Dealer* editors to line up favorable coverage for the atomic plant. . . . " He adds that a casualty of this meeting was P-D environmental reporter Bill McCann, who was attacked verbally in the city room by Princiotto for his "refusal to write a story based on CEI propaganda. . . ."[5]

Cleveland attorney Jerome Kalur, who heads a group which opposes the plant, writes in support of Bartimole, "It is the feeling of our legal group that the *Plain-Dealer* has been under continuing economic pressure to aid the plant construction effort."

Interestingly, in its questionnaire, CEI stated that in its opinion the work of the P-D had been biased anti-utility; and in response to the question "Do you feel existing utility-press relations are adequate to informing the public of your plans," the utility said, "No. Biased reporters make it necessary to buy space, on occasion, to tell what we feel is the objective story." (A group of 30 articles by the *Plain Dealer*'s McCann was used in the pretest for the coding sheet as reported earlier. The articles were chosen because they were seen to contain many of the adversary items on the coding sheet. They were both sophisticated and detailed.)

Larry Williams, an opponent of the Trojan Station nuclear facility of Portland General Electric (PGE), discusses the pressures that company has brought to bear on the news media of Portland:

> Having fairly good relations with the news media in Portland, we have learned of several instances where news stories have been toned down or completely squelched due to pressure from Portland General Electric. Two shows have been prepared for KGW-TV (which has the best news coverage in the area) by their staff which were eventually killed by management. KGW-TV did run a satirical cartoon involving the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant which PGE immediately tried to prevent from being run on the late evening news. In that instance the television station did not back down. We know that PGE calls the newspapers every time an article is written which is adverse to their position. Reporters tell us that stories have been pulled after their first edition at the request of PGE.

In addition to letters and advertising, challenged editors are also more likely to state that they will run an in-depth series on nuclear power than are unchallenged editors ($p < .10$). (Surprisingly, there was no significant difference on this question for large and small papers, as one would expect.)

While there was no significant difference between editors in challenged and unchallenged situations on the likelihood of taking an editorial position, it is worth noting that all six newspapers which editorialized against the plants were operating in challenged situations. Five of the six were large papers, and all six were reporting the activities of an IOU.

On the surface, a surprising finding from the questionnaire was the response from 73.1 percent of the editors that they did not have trouble getting information from the utility—surprising in light of the opponents' response (82.6 percent did have trouble). There are two likely explanations: 1) The papers are indeed not having any difficulty getting information; or 2) The questions they are asking of the utility are not of a sufficient sophistication to require utility evasiveness—or perhaps few questions are asked at all. There is some evidence to support the statement that those papers which are digging for information, and presumably doing the best job of coverage, are among the 17 which answered that they *were* having trouble getting information.

Editors in challenged situations were more likely to state that they were having difficulty than were editors in unchallenged situations ($p < .10$). Thus it is possible that if a challenge produces the news pegs or inspiration needed for a newspaper to tackle the subject head-on, it will more likely meet utility resistance than the paper which is not reporting the story in depth.

Approaching the problem from the other direction, are there any uniting characteristics of the 17 papers which reported that they were having difficulty? These 17 were more likely ($p < .10$) to use a specialist on the story (usually a science or environment writer) than were the other 50 papers. Twelve of the 17 papers are in challenged situations; 12 are large (metro) papers; and five of the six papers which editorially opposed nuclear plants are in this group. Included in the group of 17 (of those which did not request anonymity) are:

Eugene *Register-Guard* (local paper, challenged situation, public utility)
Harrisburg *News* (metro paper, challenged situation, IOU)
Huntsville *Times* (metro paper, challenged situation, public utility)
Los Angeles *Times* (metro paper, challenged situation, IOU)
Philadelphia *Bulletin* (metro paper, challenged situation, IOU)
Providence *Bulletin* (metro paper, challenged situation, IOU)
St. Paul *Dispatch* (metro paper, challenged situation, IOU)

While it is risky to read too much into statistics involving 17 papers in a sample of 67, there are signs that indicate dissatisfaction with utility information may be a function of performance: those papers using specialists and reporting in-depth may have more difficulty than other papers.

Most of the complaints of the newspapermen about information center on utility evasiveness; an unwillingness to discuss the full environmental impact of the plant; and secrecy on future plans for the site (such as how many units will eventually be constructed) and the cooling methods to be used. The Huntsville *Times* wrote, "[We get] Stock answers on environmental impact: 'We'll do whatever is necessary to meet standards.' That's very ambiguous. Specifics finally came—after pumping, pleading, and threatening." The Philadelphia *Bulletin*, which is reporting construction of Philadelphia Electric Company's Limerick Generating Station, wrote, "The utility has been reluctant to discuss the plant's piped-in water supply; no nearby river water is available for cooling." The New London (Conn.) *Day* said of its dealings with Northeast Utilities on the Millstone Nuclear Power Station, "Rumors persist about possibility of third plant at site. Officials deny it but I question if we're getting right information." The Los Angeles *Times* reports that, "Southern California Edison picks its consultants very carefully. Their reports usually say what Edison wants. Some information was falsified." The *Times* is now reporting Edison's addition of units at the San Onofre site in Southern California. A major Southern metropolitan paper states that the information problem is "compounded by rapidly changing standards for plant operation and a general lack of qualified non-company sources of information."

Plant opponents are more outspoken on the subject of a communication problem with utilities, and their plaints are instructive. Toledo Edison, Philadelphia Electric Company, and Portland General Electric were all accused of incomplete disclosure of information on the environmental impact of their proposed plants. Opponents were angry that questions were answered by public relations men (rather than engineers or top management personnel) with the attendant PR gloss. Wrote Phyllis M. Slykhouse of the Saginaw Valley Nuclear Study Group, which is opposing the Midland Nuclear Plant of Michigan Consumers Power Company (an IOU): "Only information available is from people in public relations. They don't supply facts, but promotional materials. The environmental impact of the plant and of the 880 acre cooling pond associated with it is not known." Similarly, Ms. Jesse Waller described her experience with the Duke Power Company in North Carolina over safety of the William B. McGuire Nuclear Station: "All questions on safety, experience, radioactivity, and thermal discharges received PR answers. 'Clean, safer than fossil fueled plants, etc. . . . ' We wrote to EPA [Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C.] in desperation on this matter. EPA referred the letter to their office in Virginia, who referred us to the Duke Power Company for any questions."

The experience of opponents is best put by Prof. Alfred Eipper of the Department of Conservation at Cornell University. Prof. Eipper was one of many faculty members concerned about the effects on Lake Cayuga of a nuclear plant planned by New York State Electric and Gas Company. He wrote of his experience in *Science* Magazine:

> The utility company's actions in the Cayuga Lake case seem to illustrate a behavior pattern fairly common in controversies of this general type. The strategy was to announce the proposal *after* plans for implementing it were already well under way, and to keep things moving rapidly thereafter. The substance of the company's numerous publicity releases was that the plant would benefit the community in many ways, and that the company would never allow the plant to "harm" the lake, and was conducting contract research projects which, it said, were expected to demonstrate that its operations would not damage the lake . . .
>
> Company spokesmen tended to be closemouthed, unwilling to debate issues or to discuss alternatives, and generally confined themselves to rather standardized publicy releases and announcements. They were challenged on their lack of receptiveness to the idea of using already available technological safeguards that would eliminate virtually all hazard of thermal and radiological pollution to Cayuga Lake. . . . Their public posture still seems to be that the only feasible way to operate the plant is by the relatively unique method that they have proposed from the outset.
>
> The Company proved to have been less than frank in some instances, and indeed appeared cynical. For example, it developed that the company had already (i) invested some $5 million or more in site preparation and (ii) contracted to sell half to three-fourths of its power to Consolidated Edison, in New York City, while research to assure that the lake would not be harmed was under way and before even one year's data were available for analysis.[6]

The minority of utility executives who answered that they, too, were unhappy with existing utility-press relations (21.6 percent) do not see the problem from this perspective. Some believe the press in their area is given to making sensational and irresponsible charges about the safety of nuclear plants. Northern States Power Company of Minnesota (which was challenged during construction of the Monticello plant) replied, "Their headlines can kill you and they seem to be looking for a fight instead of factual reporting only. . . . They have tried to keep a running battle going. . . . They were looking for the trouble." Other utilities clearly view the press as only one instrument to be played in a larger PR orchestra. The reply of Virginia Electric and Power Company (challenged on the Surry Power Station) is instructive: "The media can only touch the subject briefly, other avenues are used to treat the subject fully, including meetings, discussions and talks by company representatives." The reply of Pennsylvania Power and Light (so far unchallenged on its Berwick plant proposal) supports this view: "We have not been satisfied with any single medium of communication--we are using: brochures, newspaper advertisements, a traveling exhibit, speakers–and the news media."

Of the eight utility executives who expressed dissatisfaction with current press-utility relations, only one indicated that the fault may not be entirely with a sensationalist press. This reply came from a midwest IOU serving a major metropolitan area: "Our present PR is based on the 'don't say anything and maybe they'll go away' theory." This company also operates in a challenged situation.

In addition to affecting attitudes of editors on access to information, the challenged situation seems to be tied to attitudes on the power of the press. Challenged editors were more likely to state that they thought their coverage had had an impact on utility plans than were unchallenged editors ($p < .10$). These editors reported that their coverage helped force specific design changes in the plant; forced construction of a cooling tower; tightened up thermal standards; and convinced the utility not to block an historic view with the plant. Others took credit for defusing the opposition and permitting the utility to construct on schedule–smoothing the way for more nuclear plants.

The replies of opponents agree with the two views. In at least three instances–Eugene Water and Electric Board (Eugene *Register-Guard*), New York State Electric and Gas Company (Ithaca *Journal*), and Public Service Company of New Hampshire (Portsmouth *Herald*)–papers have played an important part in halting plant construction and deferring it to a later date. But others believe that press coverage sympathetic to the utility has lulled much of the public into accepting utility arguments.

No significant difference existed on this point between challenged and unchallenged utility executives. The one-quarter who felt that coverage had had an impact limited that impact to the general tone (pro- or anti-nuclear) set by the paper. Not one utility executive stated that press coverage led to some specific change in utility plans. The response of Rochester Gas and Electric Company (an unchallenged IOU) is typical: "A positive posture communicated about a safe plant and necessary plant decreased public intervention."

One final effect of a challenge is in many ways the most intriguing. Utility executives in a challenged situation were less likely to say that the public has no role play in the decision-making process than were executives in unchallenged situations. Despite the costly delays which the public can cause through intervention, executives who have experienced such harrassment seem to have adopted a more liberal, more expansive attitude toward citizen participation. If true, this is a most important finding, and a most encouraging one for challengers. Even if a challenge is in substance unsuccessful, it may change utility attitudes toward the public for the better.

Effects of Newspaper Size: The Local and the Metro Editor

The attitudes of newspaper executives on the questions of nuclear power and public utilities are remarkably similar regardless of the size of the paper involved. There was no significant difference between their attitudes on the role of the press in developing the debate; the role of the public in decision-making; the wisdom of extending access legislation to cover the utilities; or in support for such legislation. Nor were editors of the local papers more willing to state that they did not have the facilities to cover the story.

On only three points was the size of the paper involved significant. First, of the 13 papers which indicated there was a daily *better* equipped to handle the story, ten were local, and each named the nearest metro paper as the substitute. Only three metro papers deferred to a smaller paper on this question.

Second, the larger paper was more likely to use a specialist to cover the story than was a small paper. This is rather obvious, given comparative staff sizes. One local editor observed that on his paper, *all* reporters were general assignment. And another said that he was the only one on his staff who was available to cover the nuclear story.

Third, the executive of a large paper was more likely to report that he experienced difficulty getting information from the utility. This finding, in combination with earlier findings that papers in challenged situations are more likely to have difficulty getting information, and papers using specialists are also having more difficulty, seems to indicate that the large paper in a challenged situation which is using a specialist is most likely to express dissatisfaction with utility public information procedures. Whether these circumstances correlate with coverage of high quality is impossible to say without closer study of specific papers and cases. It is, however, a plausible hypothesis.

The Effects of Utility Ownership: the IOU and the Public Utility

As stated before, the small number of public utilities building nuclear plants makes it difficult to reach any conclusions about the effects of ownership on coverage. Six of a possible ten public utility executives returned questionnaires; four of five opponents to plants built by public utilities responded (but two did not read regularly either of the papers queried for that particular site); and 14 of 20 editors covering public utilities responded.

Despite the small universe it is possible to make a few statements about the effects of ownership structure. Public utilities, challenged or unchallenged, do not advertise the virtues of nuclear power; only IOUs sampled adopt this approach.

Editors covering IOUs were significantly more likely to state that they felt an obligation to develop the nuclear debate than were editors covering the publics. All editorials opposing nuclear plants were written by papers covering IOUs. And only executives of IOUs complained of current press-utility relations.

All this points to a cozy relationship between editors and public utility executives. The questionnaire data do not help answer why this is so, but a knowledge of the split in the United States between public and private power offers some clues. The two do not live comfortably together. The private power group is much the larger in terms of power generated, customers served, and capital investment. Public power is strong only in farm belt states and TVA areas of service. Private power companies resent the use of the publics as "yardsticks" against which their rates and efficiency can be measured, and where areas have been served by both a public and private system, the one has tried to force the other out. In most instances private utilities have been successful. In cases where the public utility has remained dominant, such as in Sacramento, it is possible that the local establishment, including newspaper executives, adopts a fatherly attitude toward its operation. It is certainly a non-adversary stance. The Sacramento *Bee* is an outspoken champion of public power in that city, and was instrumental in helping SMUD push PG&E out of that area. Thus it is not really surprising that such a newspaper might be less willing to broach the thorny nuclear problem than would a paper in a community served by an IOU. As the Cleveland and Portland examples show, an IOU can also develop a certain relationship with a newspaper, based on its inherent economic power, but this would seem to be a much different relationship than the proprietary one between a public utility and its local newspaper.

The National Picture: Conclusion

Increasing concern for the quality of the environment and the environmental information explosion have had nationwide effects on the quantity of press coverage devoted to the nuclear debate. The editor of the Florence (S.C.) *News* emphasizes this in remarks on his coverage of Carolina Power and Light's Robinson Plant: "Robinson plant was among the first announced and built in the country, meaning that debate over the effect of nuclear generating plants on the environment had not come into focus. There is greater awareness of possible environmental hazards now and such an announcement would probably not be taken as casually by press and public as it was earlier." Both editors and utility executives now recognize the news value of a new nuclear siting.

With the increased environmental awareness have also come challenges to more and more nuclear plants. The national questionnaire data seem to point in the same direction as the content analysis of coverage of three Northern California sitings: the most important variable determining quantity and quality of coverage is the presence or absence of an organized challenge to the plant. The editor in a challenged situation is more likely to state that he believes the story should be covered in-depth; is more likely to receive and print letters and advertisements on the subject of nuclear power; is more likely to believe that the quality of his coverage had some impact on utility plans; and is more likely to state that he had difficulty getting information from the utility. This last seems to correlate positively with the effort put into getting that information: editors of metro papers in challenged situations, who have assigned science or environmental specialists to the story, are more likely to report difficulty getting information from the utility. This is strong evidence that those who have not had difficulty have not probed deeply enough to strike it. A citizen challenge also seems to liberalize utility executives on what they believe the role of the public should be in decision-making on nuclear plants.

From the questionnaire data it was impossible to determine if local papers were outperforming metro papers nationally, as was the case with the Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat* and the Santa Cruz *Sentinel.* Because of the significantly greater chance of a metro assigning a specialist to the story, it seems that the metro is in a better position to provide coverage of higher quality, but distance can be an inhibiting factor. The editor of one southeastern metro paper said this about his efforts to cover siting of an unchallenged plant in a small town about 150 miles away: "We tried in this instance to develop some interest. We approached its people, both officials and citizens, and found no opposition. We pointed out what had arisen in other areas and questioned the cooling method selected, as well as the radiation safety measures. We got nowhere."

Local papers do not want to give up the story to their big-city cousins, but staffing it is a problem. One answer is non-utility sources who can feed accurate information to the papers. (Recall that it was pointed out earlier that such sources are nonexistent on utility planning and economics, due to access problems.) The editor of the Gloucester (Mass.) *Daily Times* speaks for a number of concerned editors of small papers:

> We have attempted to report the status of the proposal here and the study by the city manager. [The plant is planned by a group of small public utilities.] We are attempting to get and print an in-depth report on nuclear plants in general done by the League of Women Voters. To do a report of this depth ourselves would mean pulling one of three city reporters off his regular beat for weeks perhaps. Papers our size (10,000 circulation) can't do that very often. We are trying to counter this weakness generally by plugging into the many citizens' groups which do report and study . . . and often then don't know how or where to get their message across to the public.

Judging from their replies, many utility executives in challenged situations seem to view all articles detailing objections to the plant as sensational and unfair; and half of those who replied stated that the press should not independently report the nuclear debate. The reply of a challenged southeastern IOU is typical:

> We do not advocate muzzling the press and public hearings should be reported. Unfortunately, the irresponsible charges are sensational and tend to be regarded as news whereas calm, factual replies fail to get the proper publicity. A big responsibility of the news media is to sift responsible statements, both pro and con, and not to inflame public concern with sensational statements that are the opinion of a vocal opponent and not factually sound.

In an unchallenged situation, if an editor adopted the above advice he would only be able to report the utility position; and in challenged situations, it is hard to see what criticism the electric power industry would not view as sensational or inflammatory.

The industry, however, is not monolithic, and there were some responses which indicate that perhaps editors, plant opponents, and utility executives can cooperate in an atmosphere less charged than at present. The following statement was received from a southern IOU whose plant has not been challenged:

> Although it makes our job more difficult at times, we operate on the theory that both good and bad news merits equal treatment. We feel no one can then say they weren't given all the facts. We also feel if we have a negative situation it is better to admit an error and get it corrected rather than to try to cover it with untruths. It's not the easy way out, but it builds credibility.

Comparing the situation in Northern California with the more fuzzy national picture, it seems that, because of the challenges to Bodega Head and Davenport and the imminence of other challenges to utilities in the State, coverage has been no worse, and more likely it has been better, than the national "average." Although no environmental or science specialist from any of the six papers studied has spent a significant amount of time on the story (as has been the case in other parts of the country), this, too, may change.

Perhaps because of the pressure of citizen challenges and the general activism of California environmentalists, PG&E falls somewhat in the middle in its expressed attitudes. It has, of course, as vigorous a public relations program as that of any utility mentioned in this report, but there is no evidence that the utility has pressured the news media in a manner similar to the Cleveland or Portland situations. The national complaints about utility secrecy on the environmental impact of the plant and future plans apply equally well to PG&E, although the former is offset somewhat by the fact that so many non-utility information sources are available in the Bay Area on the scientific pros and cons of nuclear power. The complaint that only public relations men are made available to opponents is, in this researcher's experience, also applicable to PG&E.

The frustration of a news editor trying to deal with emotional plant opponents, closemouthed utility executives, and government agencies, and still come up with a comprehensive report on nuclear power for his community, is summed up by a *Newsday* (Long Island) executive. His paper was covering siting of Long Island Lighting's (IOU) Shoreham Nuclear Power Station:

> Covering the Shoreham debate turned out to be an arduous assignment, requiring long hours for minimal stories, requiring great expertise in order to write the simplest of statements with perception, understanding and accuracy. The opponents were trying to use *Newsday* as a forum for a media war against the AEC–and the utility–with its legion of public relations men–did likewise. We endured what has become the longest continuing construction permit hearing, but not without this writer's beginning to question the entire hearing process. I do not yet know of what value the latter stages of our coverage was to those members of the reading public who had missed out on the early stages of the hearings themselves. A certain amount of background was a necessity for the readers and I'm not sure they got it. I am not sure that a daily newspaper can cover such hearings intelligently. I do know that the AEC procedures are an absurdity. I do know that the issue of nuclear power plants is not being discussed adequately anywhere in this nation. We have said these things editorially. What we haven't said editorially is this: The opponents of the Shoreham project, who handled their case very poorly, did succeed in casting reasonable doubt upon whether or not such an installation would be safe. . . . The AEC procedures are such that the project will go ahead, in spite of this. I find this enormously frustrating and depressing, and this is what I do not find well covered in the media . . .

The question, then, seems to be how the lot of the conscientious newspaper executive and the interested citizen can be improved so that the quality of press coverage and the level of debate about nuclear power will be upgraded. The answer touches on the public's access to information from corporate America in general, and elctric utilities in specific. The answer has implications for covering not just the nuclear debate, but environmental deterioration as a whole.

Some Suggestions and Conclusions

The nuclear power debate, and the more general question of an energy policy for the United States, is typical of the many serious environmental problems facing the public and the press in the 1970's. It is a problem which must be treated on a regional basis at the very least; more likely, a national perspective is both desirable and essential. Yet individual nuclear plants are constructed by local or regional utilities, with only local residents at the site and the local newspaper cognizant of the potential environmental impact of the plant. Decision-making about nuclear power is, at present, decentralized in the hands of the individual utilities, and no governmental agency is anxious to take over the planning function from these powerful businesses.

It is a typical environmental story because of the long period of time involved from inception through construction and operation; and because of the amount of time which must elapse before effects to plant and animal life can be detected. Throughout this period there are very few news pegs, in a traditional sense, on which the press can hang a news story. The leading decision-makers are private companies, with various governmental regulatory agencies exercising some small authority. Reporters with science, business, and political expertise are needed to explain the public policy decisions being made by the private utility industry, and such reporters are few indeed.

The usual manner in which science news is covered frequently leads to an emphasis on the more sensational aspects of the danger from nuclear plants. This upsets utility executives, who feel that the press is unjustly undermining public confidence in the new technology, and it exacerbates the already difficult relations between the press and the business community. The attitudes of businessmen toward the press are not similar to those of public servants. They have little regard for the importance of an active, adversary press in a free society, and because they support the media through advertising (electric utilities providing more than their share), they feel that they have the right to manage the news. For its part, the press has respected the division between government and business (public vs. private) and rarely sought to extend the adversary stance it has adopted with government to the business community, which has a power equal to that of government.

From the analysis of coverage provided by Northern California newspapers on this issue, laudable as it is in some respects, it is obvious that they have not adopted an adversary stance toward either the Pacific Gas and Electric Company or the Sacramento Municipal Utility District. This seems not atypical of the press-utility relationship in the country as a whole. Both the quantity and quality of press coverage of the nuclear debate seem dependent on the existence of a strong challenge to the utility by an organized citizens' group. In the absence of such a challenge, coverage is likely to mirror utility public relations, for the reasons stated above.

Few would disagree that one goal in solving environmental problems is to increase dramatically citizen participation in the decisions which directly affect their welfare. (Indeed, only a bare majority of utility executives constructing nuclear plants dispute this. Many do believe that the public should be well informed and vocal.) It would seem to be in everyone's best interests to improve the level and sophistication of information reaching the public about nuclear power and energy policy (as well as all other important environmental problems). The emotionalism of opponents, the frivolous challenges to plants, and the sensationalism of the press which are all decribed by the utilities are really the product of the poor quality of information reaching the public on this issue—and that is in major part the fault of the utilities themselves.

To the extent that the citizen concerned about nuclear power is dependent on the daily press for his information, he is likely to be misled and kept ignorant by utility public relations men, vocal opponents trying to outshout the utilities, and reporters overmatched by the subject. Both the press and the active public are really dependent on two basic sources for their information about the nuclear dilemma (except for the occasional academician with the temerity to become involved other than as a paid consultant): the utility itself, and those government agencies regulating the utility.

The investor-owned utility is, of course, under no obligation to answer the questions of, or provide information to, the public or the press, except as its own sense of public relations dictates. A July 1971 exchange of letters between the Sierra Club's Northern California Energy Subcommittee and officials of PG&E on the possibility of the two sides meeting for an exchange of information on plans for the Davenport and

Pt. Arena sites made clear this fact. The utility will meet only with those groups, such as sympathetic County Boards of Supervisors, that it sees fit to meet; and, at present, no power can force the company to sit down with its antagonists.

The public and press can attempt to gain access to utility plans and documents through the governmental agencies which regulate the industry. A great deal of information is available this way: applications to the PUC for certificates of public convenience and necessity; preliminary safety analysis reports and construction permit applications to the AEC; and environmental impact statements to that same body. But much of this is available too late in the siting procedure to be useful to intervenors; it may not answer in detail their specific questions; and it will most likely not speak to the planning and overview questions which dictated the need for another power plant in the first place.

Before the staff of the California State PUC enters a public hearing with PG&E on the granting of a certificate of public convenience and necessity, its technical and legal experts may make data requests to the utility. These will usually be answered in writing by the utility; although, if the company objects to a request, it can (and does) approach the superior of a staff member and have the request squelched. The interested citizen can make use of the PUC staff to ask some questions for him so that he, too, can be prepared for the hearing—and the press could do this also. (The information the PUC staff itself gathers through the data request procedure is not public, although on request of the public it may be made so by a hearing examiner or a Commissioner. But this is discretionary. The utilities do not want this information made public, and the PUC operates under the general rule "When in doubt, leave it private."[7])

Working through the PUC staff is not really a satisfactory method for getting information from the utility. Too many requests would tire the staff and make it impossible for the PUC to prepare for the hearing. It would soon put the PUC in an uncomfortable position. At present the public may approach a hearing examiner or Commissioner directly before the hearing and make motions for the utility to answer certain questions. But the public has no assurance that the questions will be answered either promptly or fully. It is impossible to subpoena a utility official for a deposition under oath. Because there is no discovery procedure, the public cannot submit a lengthy list of interrogatories to the utility to be answered under oath. It is impossible for the public to determine what documents the utility has in its possession so that a request can be made for public disclosure.[8] From the public's perspective, the hearing is an unfair contest in which the utility holds all the trump cards.

Without an active challenge to a plant, it is unlikely that the local press will devote too much space to the nuclear debate. If information is difficult to piece together, as the editor of *Newsday* indicated, the metropolitan press will be discouraged from covering the story. (It seems that both the local and metro press have an important role to play in coverage, the former chronicling the local challenge and providing advance notice of hearings and meetings, and the latter taking a broader perspective with more detailed, non-news peg coverage under the guiding hand of a specialist.)

As stated before, the goal should be to make it easier for press and public to get information on the nuclear debate. A possible key to unlocking utility files is extension of the freedom of information laws to cover public utilities.

This is neither a final nor wholly effective solution to the problem, as any newsman who has experienced secrecy in government will be quick to point out. But it would have many important psychological benefits. First, the burden of proof for keeping information secret would fall on the utility. Second, the utility would be on notice that it was no longer to make decisions with public policy import in private. This has probably been the most profound effect of open record and open meeting legislation on public officials: they have internalized the principle that decisions and documents affecting the public interest must be public. And third, reporters might feel more secure in adopting an adversary stance toward the utility industry in covering its affairs. The artificial distinction between government and business, particularly government and utility, would begin to break down. This might encourage more detailed coverage of the utility industry, and provide the public with more information early in the siting procedure, when it can still be influenced, along with data on utility planning and economics.

From extension of these laws to cover public utilities, it would only be a short step to extension covering *all* corporations intimately involved with the quality of the environment. Both formulas popularly advanced for cleaning up the air and water–tighter regulation of industry, or a method of taxation so that the manufacturer will have an economic incentive not to pollute–depend on increased public information about how and why corporate America acts as it does.

Editors who have covered the nuclear debate in their communities state in strong numbers that they would support extension of such legislation to cover public utilities; utility executives, while they cannot be expected to support such a move, should not fear it, as it will reduce the emotionalism in the debate which is often bred of ignorance and eliminate some of the costly delays in siting.

Increased flow of information from the corporation to the public seems a logical outgrowth of the increasing concern over environmental deterioration in the United States. If access statutes are ever to apply to non-governmental bodies, now is the time to introduce such legislation. The special quasi-governmental status of public utilities makes them the logical place to start.

FOOTNOTES

1. For an excellent discussion of the depletion of fossil fuels, see Brown, Harrison, ***The Challenge of Man's Future*** (Viking Compass Books, New York, 1970), Chapter V.

2. For a layman's discussion of the problems surrounding the construction of nuclear power plants, see either Curtis, Richard and Hogan, Elizabeth, ***Perils of the Peaceful Atom*** (Ballantine Books, Inc., New York, 1970) or Bryerton, Gene, ***Nuclear Dilemma*** (A Friends of the Earth/Ballantine Book, New York, 1970). Both have an anti-nuclear power plant bias. For a fuller discussion, see the three volumes of hearings entitled ***Environmental Effects of Producing Electric Power,*** Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Oct. 28-31, Nov. 4-7, 1969; Jan. 27-30, 1970; and Feb. 24-26, 1970, ***passim.***

3. Letter of Feb. 16, 1971 from Harold Miossi to Arthur Hillman of PG&E.

4. Telephone interview, June 12, 1971.

5. *Point of View,* Vol. 3, No. 16, p. 1.

6. "Pollution Problems, Resource Policy, and the Scientist" by Alfred W. Eipper in ***Science,*** July 3, 1970, p. 12.

7. The information on the internal workings of the PUC staff was compiled in numerous background interviews in the first seven months of 1971.

8. The information on the difficulties encountered by the public in getting infomration from a utility before a public hearing was compiled in interviews with David Strain, a San Francisco attorney involved in Sierra Club intervention at the Diablo Canyon site for a PG&E nuclear plant. The interviews occurred throughout June and July 1971.

Chapter Seven

THE PRESS AND THE GROWTH ESTABLISHMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SAN JOSE

In most details, San Jose is a microcosm of the process of urban growth, central city deterioration, and suburban sprawl. Most distinctive is the rapidity with which the cycle of growth and deterioration and now revitalization are proceeding in San Jose.

In 1920 San Jose was a sleepy rancho settlement of 39,600 in an area of 6.5 square miles. By 1940 its population had increased to only 68,500 in an area of 10.9 square miles. The growth of the defense, aerospace, and electronics industry in the post-war era led to a decade of explosive growth in the 1950's. From a 1950 figure of 95,000 people in 17 square miles, San Jose's population mushroomed to 202,600 in 1960; the city's boundaries leapfrogged out on radial spokes to encompass 92.5 square miles. In 1961, the city projected a population of over a million for the year 1980 within municipal lines bounding more than 200 square miles.

San Jose's growth is the product of an aggressive promotion and annexation policy which eagerly sought development. A study by the Stanford Environmental Law Society describes the process[1]:

> The tremendous expansion which San Jose experienced during the 1950's was masterminded by City Manager (A.P.) "Dutch" Hamann. The carefully managed annexation program which he instituted in the early 50's caused the city to double in size by 1960 and again by 1970. Dutch Hamann's goal was to make San Jose, in his words, the "Los Angeles of the North." Hamann worked for and looked forward to the day when San Jose would be the biggest city in Northern California.
>
> San Jose was able to carry on its aggressive annexation policy by providing much needed sewage and drainage systems to the Santa Clara valley. With the county unable to provide adequate service, San Jose could offer sewage lines to subdividers in return for annexation of the subdivision to the city. Deals of this type were easily accomplished under a state law that permits an unpopulated area to be annexed by petition of the property owners.

The Santa Clara Planning Department is only slightly more delicate in its description[2]:

> In the past, city governments, overrun by population increase, pressured for additional tax bases, or, eager to "grow big," willingly extended urban facilities, especially sewers and streets, to whatever scattered sites developers proposed to build on. These municipal governments and the county were equally willing to approve, almost anywhere, zoning for residential uses and supporting commercial and other uses . . .
>
> Several cities, as well as the county, have also assumed a highly permissive role with offices, banks, and clinics and strip commercial development–lenders, builders, firms and institutions determine the amount and location of commercial and office structures that are needed . . .
>
> The most populous city in the county with some opportunity to develop its downtown into a truly "urbane," office-cultural-entertainment center has followed conflicting policies. Thus San Jose promotes concentration of office functions in the core while simultaneously fostering decentralization.

The attitudinal setting for San Jose's growth ethic is suggested by former City Manager Hamann's introduction to the Capital Needs plan for the 1970's:

> San Jose was a town of 92,000 population and 17 square miles just 20 years ago. Today San Jose is a City with an area of more than 135 square miles, a population of 450,000 and is just beginning to find its pace. There is no question in my mind that San Jose will be the dominant City of Northern California before the next 20 years have passed. The growth which lies before the City will dwarf all that has gone before.
>
> There are many intangibles to a City that can be supplied only by the spirit and attitude of its residents. San Jose already has a tradition of friendliness, warmth, and willingness to change and grow . . .
>
> It has become fashionable in recent years to run down the community and government, whether national, state or municipal. San Jose has been called a sprawl, a conglomeration, an "ugly" City. It seems to me the people who say this must never have driven through the major cities of the West, driven up and down their residential, business, and industrial streets, good and bad. Surely they have never passed through Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore or any other of the Midwest and Eastern cities.
>
> There's an old saying—if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. Well, I've never minded the heat and I don't mind the criticism—as long as people don't start believing it, and don't give up on their City and quit trying.
>
> The fact is that San Jose, whatever its faults, is a fine city and a beautiful one. It's going to be a great one . . .[3]

The aggressive and promotional aspects of San Jose's expansion are masked in the language of *laissez faire*. This apologia appears in the discussion draft of the city's master plan of 1964:

> Within the City of San Jose no attempt has ever been made to phase urban development to rationally balance the input and output costs and benefits that the public-at-large shares. One of the most pointed criticisms directed toward the city relates to policies that encourage and condone uncontrolled and undirected growth. It is thought that the results of such policies are wasted land resources, burdensome taxes, inefficient public services and costly utilities. To truly satisfy the goal stated relative to residential development would necessitate the phasing of urban development. No precise legal tools exist for this purpose. Exclusionary zoning has generally failed as a development control. Public ownership of undeveloped land other than Natural Reserves, forests, monuments, etc. is not feasible under our democratic system. The only controls that have been used with some degree of success are annexation controls and restrictions on the provision of storm, sanitary, street and highway facilities.
>
> These devices could be used in San Jose to phase development in a manner to achieve the highest benefit at the lowest cost to the greatest number of people, if such a goal is conceded to be community-wide in acceptance. So far, action at the local level by the electorate has not stressed such a goal, no matter how hard professional planners may press for such an objective.[4]

The results of such a policy are appallingly predictable.

The Environmental Law Society concludes that "due to its growth and its orientation toward development," urban dislocation problems are exaggerated in San Jose[5]:

> Lack of unique identity
> High cost of service provision
> Sprawl suburban development
> Haphazard land use and destruction of open space
> Highway strangulation
> Lack of usable open space

Hodgepodge zoning patterns
Air pollution
Water pollution

The Law Society concludes that San Jose's scatterization, sprawl and disorganization are the product of an ethic which embraces "growth for its own sake." A more convincing analysis of the growth ethic—one that is dynamic rather than static—is offered by the county planning department. The county suggests that the growth patterns are the interaction of permissive government and an aggressive private sector; growth for profit's sake. The county's transportation planning study puts it this way:

> Programs and policies appear to be based on the implied assumptions that the private sector, alone, is responsible for deciding the broad distribution and kinds of land uses and that government's job (rather than planning, ordering or staging development), at most, is to help this development occur.[6]

In the "mixed economy," the "modern entrepreneur" seeks to maximize profit by manipulating government subsidy.[7] The flow of profits and the investment of capital is most secure where government's purposes coincide with those of developers or where government is controlled by the electoral investments and political influence of growth interests. In San Jose, the developer's needs for zoning variances, and for public subsidy in the form of streets, utilities and schools have been accommodated—in advance. Where the developer's ethic has been so unqualifiedly accepted by government, it is difficult to tell which dog is wagging which tail.

San Jose defends its land-use policies on the grounds that it is organizing land that will see eventual urbanization under a governmental umbrella that is capable of effectively delivering urban services. Such a role is suitable, they maintain, for the regional headquarters city of the South Bay—a city which can have a central focus and a sense of urban identity. At the same time, official San Jose contends that it is developing the potential for balanced development and a balanced tax base. Critical to the argument is the ability of a large city to attract industrial land users, an effort that, to date, has been largely disappointing.

In the process of expanding its periphery through annexation, San Jose has lost much of the vitality of its central business district (CBD). The decline mirrors the national picture—but again the rate of change has been swifter. In the middle '50's, large retailers such as Sears moved from locations in the CBD. They were followed by car dealers, and such heavy middle-income employers as the City and County Office centers and the *Mercury-News.* Similarly, finance and office center executives with high incomes shifted their consumer activity to regional shopping centers on the periphery. The result was a drastic shift in clientele for central city retailers—to low income, elderly, minority or student consumers.

In a multiplier effect, many service agencies followed car dealers and retailers to less centralized locations. The flight was aggravated by the inconvenience of parking facilities, congestion, and the deteriorating physical plant of downtown buildings.

Census Tract figures for 1967[8] show that in seven of the ten tracts contiguous to the CBD, the population of Mexican-American citizens was greater than 20 percent; in half of the census tracts the proportion of Mexican-Americans was greater than 30 percent. This compared with a county-wide average of less than ten percent. In all but one of the ten census tracts surrounding the CBD, unemployment was above five percent and in seven of the ten, it was higher than nine percent. That compared with a 1967 countywide unemployment figure of less than four percent.

In the same year, all the census tracts surrounding the CBD displayed a high percentage of households with an income of less than $4000. In all tracts the percentage was above 25 percent; in seven it was above 35 percent. The figures are a graphic indicator of the concentration of students (primarily concentrated in one tract), poor, elderly, and minority on the CBD periphery.

Its blighted surroundings sapped the vitality of the retail market of the CBD. A declining range of merchandise compounded by rising tax rates and suburban shopping alternatives led to a loss of middle and upper income customers. The same customers sought entertainment beyond the CBD where shopping could be paired with night life and easy access.

The business leadership of the CBD responded by engineering the creation of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. In two redevelopment projects–Park Center and San Antonio Plaza–it has replaced "blighted areas" with high-rise office headquarters for the Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank, a motel-convention center, and several other financial institutions. Commercial development has been paired with a community theater.

Park and parking development have also been high priorities in San Jose's efforts at urban regeneration, as has freeway development.

The emphasis upon the economic well-being of the CBD where it conflicts with the needs of residents of peripheral neighborhoods is suggested by the inverted semantics of the Master Plan[9]:

> Single persons, childless couples and retired persons desiring the amenities and services of close-in living can appreciably contribute to the well-being of the Central Business District. These persons can provide an important night time population to an area now partially dried up by the exodus of its daytime office population.

The ultimate goal for the revitalization of San Jose's CBD is to create a real estate climate and prestige ambience which will attract corporations to locate their regional headquarters in what will soon be the largest city in Northern California. According to the 1964 master plan draft:

Specific objectives for the San Jose Central Business District are[10]:

1) Unification of the CBD architecturally and visually.
2) Improvement of site characteristics through the provision of new relationships between the elements comprising the core; retail stores, offices, hotels, motels, parking, pedestrians, motorists, trucks, cultural, and residential complexes.
3) Elimination of blight, deterioration, and obsolescence.
4) Provision of new amenities.
5) Joint action for cohesive management.

Principles to be used in the development of the Central Business District are:

1) Compactness of elements for pedestrian movement.
2) Convenient and easy accessibility to the Central Business District.
3) Circumferential routes to remove through traffic.
4) Functional internal circulation in the core to aid and maximize accessibility of elements.

5) Off-street parking properly located and of sufficient quality to overcome objections to core conditions.
6) Transportation terminals coordinated as impetus to mass transit.
7) Peripheral development of nature to best enhance Central Business District.
8) Appearance of highest possible order for visual enhancement.

The optimistic program for redevelopment is based on projections that San Jose's population will double in 15 years. Redevelopment on a more massive scale is occurring under the auspices of the federal Model Cities program. The demonstration project–in its early planning stages–encompasses an area just west of the CBD which includes ten percent of the city's population. Thirty-eight percent of the people in the project area are Mexican-American. Sixty percent of the funding is supplied by the federal government under Title 1 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966.

Thus it is apparent that in San Jose as nationally, urban redevelopment and the revitalization of the central business district are tapping the resources of the mixed economy: the interface between public subsidy and private profit.

One of the most significant inputs to the mixed economy is public subsidy for transportation–highway, transit and airport. The siting and routing decisions of publicly funded transportation facilities affect the real estate, business and financial futures of an area.

In the case of transit routing, Meyer notes that[11]:

> Historically, the creation of high property values in downtown areas has occurred because such sites are at the point where major transport networks, both inter-city and intra-city, converge. Many owners of central business properties have therefore looked on expansion of the transport system–in particular, increasing the extent to which the transit network is centered on their properties–as a means of producing an increase, or a greater increase, in property values. This is especially true if the cost of providing such transport improvements does not fall upon the owners of central properties. Then they can hardly lose. Such owners naturally become strong advocates of government subsidies to improve downtown transportation facilities, particularly when the tax base used to supply such subsidies is statewide or nationwide. However, if urban property values today are less dependent on public transit service than they were under more primitive technological conditions, then it is not clear that improved transit access will confer major benefits upon centrally located properties. . . .
>
> Stated another way, the availability of high-performance public transit may relocate or concentrate dense activities but there is no evidence that it creates a new demand for such density.

While the amount of demand that is concentrated may be small in terms of the scale of the city, there is a considerable multiplier effect. Night life, convention activity, retail sales, hotel facilities, regional office centers and high-income apartment concentrations tend to develop interactively. This is the strategy in San Jose–one that includes both buslous and BART-type transit. According to a 1967 planning department bulletin[12]:

> Reduced to a simple statement, our problem now is to choose between a restrictive provincialism on one hand, or a significant share of the Bay Area's economic potential as a regional center. BART is already stimulating economic growth in its service area. The pattern of regional economic development will soon be set; San Jose and Santa Clara county can participate if we act decisively . . .
>
> In addition to relieving traffic congestion, rapid transit has a major impact on construction rates of office and commercial facilities. In the low-density city of Toronto, transit-generated

> construction alone has raised the assessed valuation $1 billion *per year* (bold face in original) over the last ten years, equalling two-thirds of the total city increase of 40% during the decade. In the Bay Area, the Bank of America and Pacific Telephone and Telegraph cite BARTD as a major stimulant of downtown development in San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley. In Berkeley, a 50% increase in downtown office space is being constructed or planned, located in three buildings within one block of the BARTD station.

The San Jose Master Plan calls for study of transit feasibility, but boasts that a downtown terminal "could considerably enlarge the trade area of the CBD and tap a vast employee pool ranging throughout the Bay Area."[13]

Predictably, the Association of Metropolitan San Jose, now called the Chamber of Commerce, supported the 1970 County Ballot Measure A which would have established a countywide transit district. In a poll* taken for this study we found that of 41 members of Chamber Action Councils, 38 approved some form of high speed public transit, two disapproved and one was undecided. Nine of the Chamber members mentioned growth or the economy as reasons for transit development, 31 mentioned congestion or the inefficiency of the private car, 11 mentioned environmental advantages for mass transit.

In a sample of 42 members of the San Jose Board of Realty issue committees, 37 supported some form of high-speed public transit; five opposed. Eleven realtors reached their position on the basis of economic or growth arguments; five on environmental grounds; 33 were persuaded by congestion.

Clearly, the growth establishment of San Jose supports some form of rapid transit. Among environmentalists, a distinctly different pattern emerges. Members of the Save Our Valley Action committee favored transit 45 to 1. Twenty mentioned environmental reasons; 32, congestion and freeway inadequacy; only four, economic arguments. The content of environmentalists' economic arguments also differed: the emphasis was upon financial feasibility rather than the effect upon the county's economy.

In summary, the growth establishment sees transit planning as an instrument of the mixed economy capable of relieving congestion and realizing economic growth potentials. A majority of both San Jose and county voters opposed Measure A.

Airport planning is a similar instrument in the mixed economy. A Bay Conservation and Development Commission report indicates the effects of air transportation[14]:

> There have been no definitive studies of the effects of air transportation on the Bay Area economy, but enough is known to indicate that the benefits are substantial. The benefits are realized first in the direct employment and purchases by airports, airlines, commercial aviation service operators, military aviation and other public and private suppliers of air transport services. Employment at the 34 Bay Area airports is estimated at 35,000 excluding military personnel. Aggregate outlays for salaries and wages and purchases of materials and supplies of these airports amounts to billions of dollars annually.
>
> Of even greater importance, however, is the higher level of economic activity made possible in the Bay Area by the availability of good air transportation. . . .
>
> Not only does air transportation affect regional economic growth, airports are major determinants of local land use and traffic patterns. Proximity to airports is and will continue to be a major factor influencing many business and industrial location decisions. An airport acts as a "magnet" or stimulus for development in much the same way as a freeway interchange or rapid transit station, although on a larger scale. The industrial development on

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*A further description of this poll and the polling procedure is included in Appendix VI.

> the San Francisco Peninsula would not have occurred as intensively or as quickly but for the presence of San Francisco Airport.
>
> On the other hand, airports have a negative effect on some land uses. Within metropolitan areas, airports are competing for scarce land which may be desirable for housing and recreational uses. The presence of an airport, particularly a large one, will usually repel such uses from occupying nearby sites while attracting more business-oriented activities. However, the degree of "repulsion" depends on the supply of land in the general area. Incompatible uses can and often do locate near airports when no other sites are available, usually to the detriment of all concerned.
>
> To summarize, an airport can be used to direct, focus, guide and create a business and employment center and to stimulate area development and commerce. In a real sense an airport can be used as a tool in regional planning. Decisions to alter the pattern of air carrier service, to expand existing facilities or build new ones can have important implications for Bay Area regional development and should not be taken without considering these effects.

The economic potentials of airport expansion in San Jose are clearly recognized. The Chamber of Commerce transmitted a report to San Jose's city council in 1970 which warned[15]:

> . . . With the tremendous economic forces stimulating the community, any action by the council to severely limit the development of the Airport will undoubtedly have a profound influence on the economic growth of the Metropolitan San Jose area. . . .
>
> During the last ten years, 653 new industries located in Santa Clara County. It would certainly seem safe to assume that an equal or a greater number of industries will locate in the County by 1980. One thing is certain, that many of these new plants will be branch operations of firms located in other parts of California and the United States which will be counting on convenient air transportation. . . .
>
> San Jose, until the last two years, has been dormant in terms of any significant development which would identify it as a major city in California and the Nation. Now we suddenly see millions of dollars being invested in the development of the Core Area, industrial parks, and office parks. The San Jose Municipal Airport was the key factor which influenced the decision of Dillingham Corporation to move ahead with its Gateway Center Project and Allied Properties to develop their land. The establishment of San Jose's first major industrial park by Boise Cascade was influenced by the San Jose Municipal Airport which will also be an important factor in the future industrial park development. . . .
>
> It is also important to consider the City's positive role in the redevelopment of the Core Area and its desire to see San Jose become a major regional headquarters center. In order to succeed, San Jose is going to have to influence many firms to locate office facilities to absorb the millions of square feet of office space that will be constructed. The availability of convenient air passenger service will be a major factor in their decision whether or not to locate in San Jose.

The economic advantage of airport location was also underlined in testimony before the County Planning Policy Committee's subcommittee on airport location.

In this context, it was no surprise to arrive at poll results of Chamber of Commerce members which found 28 supporting airport development, five opposing it, six desiring development with relocation and two undecided. Among realtors, 23 favored development, eight opposed it, eight opted for airport relocation and five were undecided.

Among Save Our Valley environmentalists, five favored expansion at the present location, 36 opposed development, five favored development at another location, and one was undecided. Among Sierra Club members with homes in the flight path of the airport, seven favored development, 26 opposed it, five favored relocation and four were undecided. Among Sierra Club members with foothill homes located well beyond the noise nuisance of the airport, 14 favored development at the present site, 21 opposed it, and six favored relocated development. Two were undecided.

Growth or economics was mentioned as persuasive by 25 of 41 Chamber members; 17 of 44 realtors; but only 21 of the total 122 conservationists. Opposition to the airport on environmental grounds was mentioned by eight Chamber members, eight realtors and 87 conservationists. In all, 11 realtors and 11 Chamber members mentioned environmental issues in their poll responses on the airport issue.

Predictably, the growth establishment downgrades environmental issues in their positions on this mixed economy development proposal. The mention, however, of environmental issues by over 25 percent of Chamber members is indicative of a growing awareness of the environmental implications and hazards of the growth economy. This new awareness is even reflected in the literature of the Chamber:

> The Economic Development Council [an action council of the Chamber] will dedicate itself to the creation of additional jobs for those people who have been displaced as the result of the recent shift in employment. Toward achieving this goal, the Council will vigorously recruit new selective payrolls to the area, keeping in mind that compatibility between industry and environment is necessary.

More companies, as long as they don't pollute! The outcome of these policy decisions will have a dramatic effect on the environment of Santa Clara Valley–its land use, population, size and density, its levels of air and noise pollution and the well-being of its ethnic minorities and other underprivileged groups. They will also have a significant impact on the financial ledger of its news media.

The Newspaper and Economic Growth

Behind the blush of First Amendment freedom, objective reporting, and social responsibility, the newspaper is a business. Two-thirds of newspaper operating revenue is derived from advertising.[16] In an era of rising taxes, personnel costs, and newsprint rates, growth in advertising sales is critical for sustaining newspaper profitability.

The lifeline of the newspaper is the health of the local economy–to an increasing degree, not simply upon a virile local economy, but one of a particular shape and form. The big city paper is as healthy as its potential advertisers with regional or total-city markets–markets as heterogeneous as the paper's circulation.

In this sense, the newspaper has a direct stake in the growth patterns, transportation accessibility, and customer appeal of the regional shopping outlets of the city. It is these advertisers in a healthy city that are most stable and predictable, and far less likely to transfer their messages to direct mail, sub-community weeklies, or shoppers.

The nature of the boomer and booster projects which gloss a newspaper's prestige, power, and economic interest insert it squarely in the activity of the "mixed economy." These projects coincide with the effort to stem the flood of middle and upper income residents to suburban homes and neighborhood buying habits–and to displace low-income families from the central business district.

The simple act of servicing advertisers gives the newspaper a vital role to play in behalf of the growth establishment. The possibility of a leadership role must be more tempting still.

Presuming that newspapers do desire to operate in their economic self-interest, two behaviors can be projected that would serve these interests. The first would be to promote growth—the plain and simple proliferation of people in a concentrated area who can act as customers and subscribers. A newspaper's economic benefit from growth is suggested by our research which found that among 11 California evening dailies:

1) 44.5% of the variance in the rate of increase in ad lineage from newspaper to newspaper can be accounted for by the rate of growth of population in the ABC zone. The results were significant at the .05 level.
2) 51.5% of the variance in the rate of circulation growth from newspaper to newspaper can be accounted for by the rate of growth of population in the ABC zone. The results were significant at the .01 level.

The results take on special interest in light of the large number of variables which can account for the remainder of the variance—everything from the aggressiveness of the advertising department to the national economy pales beside the impact of population growth.

The second behavior would be the promotion of public and private policies which lead to the continuing vitality of regional marketplaces. As Janowitz points out, too great dispersion of population growth lends itself to the proliferation of sub-community weeklies:

> *In a demographic sense, the growth of the community newspaper was as dependent* on the dispersion of the population from the center of the city to outlying areas as it was on increases in total population.[17]

Thus, in terms of competition, the metropolitan newspaper would be wise to promote urban population and economic growth policies which increase the characteristics of concentration and ease of circulation. The economic interests of the metropolitan press encourage a role in the determination of the public policy and subsidy decisions of the mixed economy—especially those which relate to the rate, concentration and location of transportation facilities, urban redevelopment and urban growth.

With the added inducement of economies of scale in the newspaper's manufacturing operation—lower limit costs of newsprint, press runs, salaries, news and wire services, the print media have a distinct interest in concentrated bigness, both corporate and urban.

If the newspaper pursued its interests, it is obvious that its actions would coincide with those of the growth interests of the community—and most often collide with those of environmentalists, minorities, and the poor. How fair, balanced, and probing the press is and can be in this setting is the concern of this study.

Like any complex social organization, the newspaper has many interfaces with the community. The average citizen has contact only with the newspaper's printed product. He may complete a loop in the sense that he patronizes advertisers with the want ads or sale pages in hand, but his contact with the newspaper is distant, passive and non-interactive.

For the purposes of this discussion, the most important interfaces between the newspaper and the community are those which are interactive: the relationship between newsman and news source; between newspaper executive and community influential; between marketing director and community association.

At the risk of gross oversimplification, some possible typologies of relationship between newspaper personnel and community influentials may be suggested. These typologies have the advantage that they describe a dynamic relation rather than a static situation: they have the disadvantage of overlap.

1. Active newspaper roles:
    - A. Prestige seeking: the newspaper or its personnel makes a commitment to a course of action with the intent of creating the acclaim, satisfaction or prestige of accomplishment.
    - B. Profit seeking: the newspaper or its personnel makes a commitment to a course of action with the intent of keeping or realizing economic advantage.
    - C. Information seeking: the newspaper or its personnel makes a commitment to gathering information of neutral, advocacy or adversary value.
    - D. Acceptance seeking: the newspaper or its personnel makes a commitment to action with the intent of gaining or keeping the friendship, membership, or acceptance of valued others.
2. Passive newspaper roles:
    - A. Accommodation: the newspaper accepts outside direction for action, defining or suppressing goals in terms of significant others.
    - B. Withdrawal or Non-involvement: the newspaper remains or becomes inactive out of choice or the inability to effect goals of action.

The conceptualization places economic interest in the perspective of a wider constellation of interacting motivations. It further suggests the very real likelihood of conflict between the "news providing" and other goal-realizing activities of the newspaper.[18]

The conflict between even-handed news and goal seeking would occur where the agenda for public policy is undecided or contested, or where divergent conceptions of public good divide the community. This, of course, is likely in a city of metropolitan size where public needs and private prerogatives differ among persons of different income and belief. In this setting of conflict, the newspaper's goals would be expected to coincide with those of the commercial and financial elite—for they are most capable of articulating the goals and providing the rewards we have described.

The conflict between the goal seeking roles and the provision of fair, balanced, and probing news is underlined by studies of newspaper performance in Chicago and Atlanta. The studies suggest the diversity of motives and commonality of goals which unite newspaper management with the community influentials of the central business district.

Prestige and Profit-Seeking: the Chicago *Tribune* and the Lakefront Exhibition Hall

The etched marble lobby of the Chicago *Tribune* carries the solemn motto:

> The newspaper is an institution developed by modern civilization to present the news of the day, to foster commerce and industry, to inform and lead public opinion and to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has ever been able to provide.[19]

The staunchly Republican *Tribune* has historically taken at least one part of that motto very seriously—the fostering of commerce and industry. Part of that effort was to secure convention and exhibition facilities for Chicago in the immediate post-war era. The Chicago lakefront seemed to be an ideal location for such facilities—past fairs in semi-permanent structures had prospered; the location offered easy access to

Loop hotels; freeway access was ideal; the location was one of natural beauty and provided a magnificent vista of Chicago's "golden age architecture" rising above the shores of Lake Michigan. And, as a *Tribune* reporter noted in an interview in 1967, without a convention center, "the colored people" would crowd out everybody else on the shorelines.[20]

A permanent convention center on the lake was Colonel Robert R. McCormick's baby–he had put $50,000 into a lakefront fair and raised another $950,000 from downtown businesses. A permanent facility would be a feather in the *Trib*'s cap and a boost to urban growth.

With help from the Chicago Convention Bureau, Marshall Field, and the Bismarck Hotel, the *Tribune* pushed through tax and enabling legislation in Springfield.

With lobbying effort from *Tribune* reporter George Tagge, race track bets were taxed and placed in a trust fund for convention facility development. As Banfield describes it[21]:

> The race-track owners, fearing the additional tax would hurt their business, opposed the bill vigorously. Nevertheless the bill passed, largely because of the efforts of a *Tribune* reporter to see it through. Tagge had covered the legislature for fifteen years, and he knew more about its inside workings than did most of its members. Many legislators were his friends of long standing. Others wanted to get on his good side or stay there.
>
> Governor Stevenson was inclined to veto the bill. He was opposed to state aid for fairs of any kind and he was under pressure from a Chicago publisher, John S. Knight of the *Daily News,* who had had an interest in a race track. However at the urging of Richard J. Daley, who had been his director of revenue and had since been elected Cook County clerk, and of Joel Boldblatt, a Chicago merchant, he let the bill become law without his signature.

Tagge's influence was sufficient that Colonel McCormick's brain-child was profaned as "Tagge's Temple" by Springfield pundits.

Further enabling legislation passed over the opposition of Chicago Real Estate Board and the Association of Commerce and Industry–groups that hoped convention activites would be located even closer to the Loop. In this effort, then *Tribune* managing editor W. Don Maxwell met almost weekly with the newly elected Republican governor. As Banfield put it, Governor Stratton "owed the *Tribune* a great deal and was on close terms with it."[22]

Conservationists provided the last-gasp opposition to the convention hall site. They viewed lakefront siting as both a crass desecration of natural beauty and a first-step effort at development of the entire lakefront shoreline. The opposition of planners and conservationists was "not shared by the newspapers, the civic associations and the politicians. They took it for granted that publicity and dollars made cities great."[23]

A conservationist lawsuit failed–as both a delaying effort and a legal one. The exhibition hall was built and dedicated to the memory of the *Tribune* publisher: "McCormick Place."

Maxwell, elevated to publisher after the Colonel's death, described the *Tribune*'s interest in the ten-year effort:

> Why did we put so much time into this? Because it's good for the city. But partly from selfish motives too. We want to build a bigger Chicago and a bigger *Tribune.* We want more circulation and more advertising. We want to keep growing, and we want the city to keep growing so that we can keep growing.

> We think the community respects a newspaper that can do things like that. People will go by the hall and say, "See that? The *Tribune* did that singlehanded." That's good for us to have them say that.
>
> If it hadn't come off—if those lawsuits had turned out wrong—it would not have been good. It's good that people should think that their newspaper is powerful. It's good that it be powerful.[24]

It is clear from examining the *Tribune*'s news pages at the time of the McCormick Place fire in 1967 and in the willingness of public officials to play dead if not overtly boost the construction project, that news coverage was the primary instrument of the *Tribune*'s potency. One example will suffice. The conservationist forces issued a press release opposing the lakefront site.

> Following her usual practice, the conservationist's public relations manager issued the release in the names of several persons of whose support she had been assured. She did not, however, check with each of them as carefully as she might before the release went out. Tagge of the *Tribune* called them and found that about half did not know exactly what had been said in their names and had not specifically authorized it. This, of course, was front-page news.[25]

The *Tribune* leadership felt few qualms. They were, after all, fighting for their city and its best interest. That's the role of a crusading newspaper and Maxwell liked the role. As he put it[26]:

> You want to see your city continue to grow rather than to die. We have nowadays—what do they call it?—"urban movement" or something like that. The core of the city is being gutted. There are great investments at stake. You can't stand by and let it die. We thought we could prevent it from dying by bringing conventions here, on the front porch of the city.

Economic Interest: The Chicago Transit Authority Fight

Like many other public transit systems in the United States, the Chicago Transit Authority's bus and elevated service in 1956 was on the decline. Line extension had not kept up with suburban growth; improvement of moving stock and safety features had not been possible with rising indebtedness; fare hikes had discouraged passengers; freeway proliferation was promoted by the political muscle of truckers, construction companies and auto clubs which jealously guarded their share of gas tax revenues.[27]

This was the setting in which the CTA sought state subsidy for expansion of improvements. Predictably, the metropolitan newspapers were interested in accessibility to the Central Business District and revitalization of the core[28]:

> All four of the Chicago daily newspapers were very much in favor of subsidizing CTA. Their interest was like that of the other big businesses in the central district; it coincided especially with that of the department stores, upon whose advertising they particularly depended. The *Sun-Times*' tie to the group was particularly close; its editor and publisher was Marshall Field, Jr.

The newspapers, however, were committed to CTA subsidy as long as it would be derived from diversion of gas tax revenues—and not real estate taxes which they shared. Gas tax diversion brought their efforts into conflict with the highway lobby and the bankers, merchants, and realtors with a stake in Chicago's 80-odd neighborhood or satellite shopping centers. Meanwhile, the suburban and community newspapers, which were served by the dispersion of population and retailing, fought the transit subsidy.

A massive editorial campaign in the metropolitan press and scare headlines of transit dangers—an elevated wreck made them more than just believable—failed to win gas-tax diversion. In the face of suburban and downstate opposition to Chicago expenditure and the political contributions of roadbuilders and construction companies, the papers' weight was neutralized: CTA subsidy from gas tax revenues failed to win legislative approval in Springfield. The forces promoting suburbanization and the political alignments of dispersion were too potent to reverse.[29]

Accommodation: Floyd Hunter's Atlanta

Floyd Hunter's study[30] of Atlanta popularized the notion of a "power structure" manipulated "by power leaders." The power structure, composed of leading industrialists and financial leaders, Hunter describes as

> a dominant policy-making group using the machinery of government as a bureaucracy for the attainment of certain goals coordinate with the interests of the policy-making group.[31]

While it can be argued that Hunter's power structure can operate only in a setting of mutual threat—the insurgence of the black community—and "value agreement" (the pervadingly conservate ideology of the South), the role he ascribes to the press is worth examining.

Political influence, Hunter maintains, allows the elite to prescribe personal invisibility in the press. Errand runners in the form of elected officials, lower-level management men on the make, and professionals receive press coverage only after policy matters have reached the implementation stage. At the formulation stage, media accommodation guarantees the elites' desired level of anonymity. Controversy is scrupulously avoided by the elite—and subsequently by the media coverage of elite projects[32]:

> "Don't rock the boat," describes the general theme of the propaganda which issues forth on the radio and is disseminated through the columns of the press in Regional City (Atlanta). The stories are not new, and they fit into the stereotype given to us by R. A. Brady in describing the propaganda put forth by the National Association of Manufacturers for the edification of the citizenry . . . "All economic issues are transmuted (by the NAM) into terms of social and cultural issues, increasingly, as the political implications and military possibilities of cumulative economic power are realized."

In other instances, where "the initiators" wished to "activate the under-structure of power," the newspapers would create the appropriate build-up. Two examples will suffice[33]:

> When the Plan of Development project (a highway project) was to be officially launched, (one of the power elite) was asked to take the presidency of one of the more powerful civic associations for a year to "swing that group into line." He was given an impressive build-up by the newspapers for his broad civic interests and for a year he devoted a great deal of time to getting the Plan of Development underway.

Similarly-timed propaganda was used in floating an International Trade Council. Only at the point that funding, a board of directors, and tacit approval of the elite had been secured, did the newspapers release the story. As one member of the Atlanta elite put it[34]:

> The public doesn't know anything about the project until it reaches the stage I've been talking about. After the matter is financially sound, then we go to the newspapers and say there is a proposal for consideration. Of course, it is not news to a lot of people by then, but the Chamber committees and other civic organizations are brought in on the idea. They all think it's a good idea. They help to get the Council located and established. That's about all there is to it.

In the Atlanta case, the elite requires the obscurity of non-coverage to de-fuse the controversy of issues and establish consensus before they reach the public agenda. One elite member mentioned these components of continuing elite influence[35]:

> The newspapers that print only that which is "fit to be read."
>
> The newsreels that show no news, only horse races, beauty contests, train wrecks and screwballs.

And, as Hunter describes the elite[36]:

> They know full well that the manipulation of various factors in the community—such as the departments of government, the labor force, and the press—is to their advantage. The relation with these parts of the community is not one of deceit, in the main, but one of value agreement. If the little fellow comes out on the short end of affairs, or if he is "not in the know," as the popular expression goes, it is for reasons other than fraud.

San Jose: The Newspaper and the Growth Establishment

In what may have been a moment of weakness, the publisher and owner of the San Jose *Mercury* and *News* told an interviewer: "Trees don't read newspapers."[37] The comment typified the *Mercury*'s celebration of growth—both urban and corporate.

The strategy, of course, paid off: the *Mercury* and *News* are members of the million line advertising club (in 1969 the *News* ranked second among afternoon papers in ad linage, and the *Mercury* ranked fifth in the morning field); they have a proud new newspaper plant—the world's largest on one floor; they share with other Ridder papers on the West Coast the only true Washington correspondent for the Bay Area press; their combined Sunday edition runs over 200 pages.[38]

With 80 percent coverage of the greater San Jose area, the *Mercury* and *News* have tapped the growth curve of Santa Clara County. In its explosive annual growth, the San Jose metropolitan area was topped only by Orange County. Its annual rate between 1960 and 1968 was 5.3 percent. Fast-growing San Diego and San Bernardino counties in the southland recorded only two percent and 3.6 percent respectively.

The *Mercury* did not just sit back and let the dollars roll in. They have the most active promotion and marketing department in the Bay Area. They have aided in the recruitment of industrial and commercial clients to the county. They have made a *cause celebre* of convention and sports facilities for San Jose. And they applauded the annexation and growth policies of City Manager Dutch Hamann.

The vaulting enthusiasm of the *Mercury* and *News* is revealed in their editorial pages: "When San Jose is twice its present size, ideally it should have pleasant residential areas, extensive commercial and industrial centers to provide jobs and tax revenues, a major park system and first rate educational, entertainment, cultural and sports facilities. San Jose can have all these things and more." The tone sounds almost anachronistic for 1969; ironically, it is anachronism in the name of "progress."

There are, however, hints of a changing attitude behind the boosterism of the *Mercury*'s editorials; even in the inverted semantic priorities of their New Year's day 1969 editorial, a new caution is evident:

> "Growth will continue to challenge the framework of government and society to meet its needs.

Or in an August 1969 editorial quoting the Bank of America:

> This area, in short, can anticipate a busy, bustling and prosperous future. Accordingly, it can anticipate also having the resources necessary to cope with the problems that continued growth is bound to bring.

Even core-city redevelopment is described as an antidote as well as an elixir:

> A focal point–to give a sense of unity to a growing, sprawling community.

The *Mercury*'s involvement in the growth establishment of San Jose does not end with its editorial page. *Mercury* management is deeply committed to membership in the associations and organizations which seek to promote growth through manipulation of the mixed economy. Membership, per se, cannot be considered an indictment of the *Mercury* or *News* performance in presenting a fair, balanced and probing picture of public policy debate in San Jose. It cannot help, however, but create professional awkwardness for reporters who must cover not only the activities of government officials but at the same time newspaper management itself.

Mort Levine, publisher of the weekly San Jose *Sun*, described the *Mercury*'s interest in growth acidly, but accurately. Speaking of airport development, he said:

> The *Mercury*'s interest in the airport issue goes back to their concept of what kind of Valley this ought to be, what kind of trade area they ought to develop. They have a very aggressive policy of shaping their own market. Major metropolitan newspapers are playing a game for big stakes. They are playing a game with numbers and very sophisticated demographic analyses in order to convince Madison Avenue that this is where the big dollars ought to be put. The more you can improve on those demographics–the income level, the mobility factor, the more jet-set types–the more it will redound to their national advertising benefit. I think this has been their goal.
>
> And there's another factor too. Most major metropolitan newspapers feel as threatened as any establishment institution by unrest and dissent and all this. As a result they would like nothing better than to see 99.9 percent of the population in this Valley white collar, employed by an electronics industry, with three cars, and nice kids who are all going to have short hair: people who take long vacations and have two houses and are consumers and spenders and have high education levels. All this helps them make a better case to the (national advertising) agencies.
>
> I think that their concern has been to change or at least embroider the image of the valley from some place out in the fruitpicker country between Fresno and Coalinga that somebody thinks about back in New York–that's the image San Jose has back there.
>
> I think there is one more concern in the airport issue. There is still an atmosphere of old-fashioned boosterism that still lingers in San Jose. It's kind of red-blooded. We want to be the biggest and best of everything. If you can beat out San Francisco airport in terms of any kind of statistic, let's do it. If we can build a big stadium to steal the 49'ers–oh boy, what a coup this would be. Well, this is the whole growth syndrome which most of the leadership in San Jose has been happy to embrace because it's good for business.[39]

The most visible example is the *Mercury* and *News* membership in the growth establishment of the community. It should be noted that membership offers as much potential to promote environmental and social responsibility as unbridled growth. The *Mercury* and *News* have interfaces with the growth elite in the following settings:

1. Al Stahl, editor of the yearly "Progress Issue," a supplement which records the growth and economic vitality of the year past in glowing language, arranges for the use of the edition in recruiting industrial and commercial clients for San Jose.

2. Marketing Director Gerald Zarwell is a member of the Metropolitan Core subcommittee of the San Jose Goals Committee. The subcommittee pushed for a commitment to urban renewal and redevelopment. Zarwell arranged for free Goals Committee advertising as a member of its steering committee.
3. P. Anthony Ridder, Business Manager of the *Mercury-News,* is a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Metropolitan San Jose, now renamed the Greater San Jose Chamber of Commerce. Other Board members include representatives of PG&E, PT&T, the Bank of America, Citizens Federal Savings, General Electric, Crocker-Citizens Bank and Security Savings & Loan. Advertising Director Louis E. Heindel was the Chamber's President for two terms.
4. Real Estate Editor Marvin Gallop is Chairman of the Greeters Committee of the San Jose Real Estate Board. Its other members are representatives of the major title companies in San Jose.
5. Norman Bowman, the *Mercury*'s business and financial editor, is an honorary member of the Board of Realty.
6. The *Mercury*'s former city hall reporter, James Spaulding, became an administrative assistant to former Mayor Ron James. He had covered city hall's role in the airport issue until shifting employers.
7. The *Mercury* has subscribed in the commissioning of studies to determine convention center feasibility and airport needs for San Jose. Ridder's role in the convention center/sports arena effort parallels the enthusiasm of the *Tribune*'s McCormick.
8. *Mercury-News* General Manager Anton F. Peterson is airport development chairman for the Chamber of Commerce, a trustee of the Metro San Jose Trust Fund and President of the Western Newspaper Industrial Relations Bureau. His resume reports that he is a member of "numerous special committees for development of San Jose/Santa Clara County."

These are static membership arrangements, rather than dynamic influence relations, but it can still be asked with considerable justification if the memberships of *Mercury-News* management deter probing reporting and promote unbalanced emphasis in the news pages of the Ridder publications.

The *Mercury* does have "competition" in the San Jose market.

The San Jose *Sun* is the flagship paper of a chain of weekly newspapers with a total staff of 55 and a circulation of 83,000. Less than one-third of combined circulation is paid—the remainder throwaway. It has five neighborhood editions, including the Milpitas *Post.*

Sun publisher Mort Levine emphasizes personalized stories of neighborhood interest, the school district beat which is largely ignored by the *Mercury*, and initiative reporting with a strong environmental emphasis. Initiative reporting, he says, will increase in the *Sun* as urban growth more thoroughly integrates the paper's once distinct neighborhood areas into the metropolitan whole. Growth, Levine says, is erasing the distinct character and identity of the suburban areas which his papers serve.

The bulk of *Sun* advertising, Levine says, comes from neighborhood shopping centers. The *Sun* is able to attract some regional retailers but no national advertising accounts. The paper's critical coverage of zoning decisions, sprawl, and expansion has eliminated its appeal to developers. The paper has lost "90 percent of the developer ads we once carried," according to Levine, and he speculates that downtown influentials may have discouraged advertisers in other businesses as well. The advertising department, he says, believes that airline ads are unattainable given the paper's strong opposition to airport expansion.

The *Sun* papers are financially viable—as indicated by a paid reporting staff of 20 and a healthy volume of supermarket ads. The narrowness of viability margin is suggested by a sign on the door of the squat and crowded Spanish-style building that houses the *Sun* operations and the Milpitas *Post*: "This is NOT a post office."

The *Sun*, with its stake in neighborhood identity, local advertising appeal and the strident environmentalism of publisher Levine, is a suitable foil in studying news coverage in a setting of economic self-interest.

Media Coverage of the Mixed Economy

The mixed economy is a setting in which the private elements of the corporate state seek to enter and influence the public policy process at the point where government subsidy can be translated into private profit. The public policy role of private sector forces us to re-examine the traditional role of the press, our concept of news, and the orthodox assumption that public policy is shaped singularly by those who hold public office or titled authority.

In the mixed economy, we will argue, the scrutiny of the press must extend to the private sector if it is to identify responsibility for public policy and "the secret springs of political design."

The press as watchdog of democracy is a role which has been enshrined in constitutional guarantee and American political theory. As Peterson describes the historical evolution of traditional libertarianism[40]:

> Six tasks came to be ascribed to the press as traditional (libertarian) theory evolved: (1) servicing the political system by providing information, discussion, and debate on public affairs; (2) enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government; (3) safeguarding the rights of the individual by serving as the watchdog against government; (4) servicing the economic system, primarily by bringing together the buyers and sellers of goods and services through the medium of advertising; (5) providing entertainment; (6) maintaining its own financial self-sufficiency so as to be free from the presures of special interests.

Even without the libertarian faith in the perfectability of man and the inevitable primacy of "definite and demonstrable" Truth through "free and open encounter" in the "marketplace of ideas," there remains this prescriptive role for the press: that it equip citizens and their leaders with the information to make reasoned judgments on matters of public policy; that it assign responsibility for errors of judgment or action in the public sphere; and that it make understandable the means and ends of the conflicting interests of the democratic polity.

This study accepts the descriptive and prescriptive notion of news as political intelligence and a role for the press which functions to service and challenge the political system, enlighten the public and guard the liberties of the individuals against the incursions of government while maintaining freedom and integrity from the pressures of private interests.

These propositions are standards and not operational criteria. From them, however, we can derive a set of operational criteria toward which media can strive and against which their performance may be measured:

1. That the media provide the citizen with information which makes him aware of policy agendas while they are still in the stages of formulation and debate.
2. That the media present information which enables the citizen to understand and assess the likely impact of a public policy decisions before they are made.

3. That the media provide information which enables the citizen to assess the interest and motivation of actors–both public and private–in the public policy process.
4. That the media seek out alternatives to policy before its determination and offer them as an agenda for debate.
5. That the media work to secure open deliberations of policy bodies and inform citizens with notification and agenda so that they may observe or participate in the decisions of government councils.

In developing this set of criteria, the problem of news coverage has not been looked at from the perspective of the publisher, reporter–or even the layout man.

Instead, the perspective has been that news is "the stuff of public policy deliberations" and that it is both appropriate and essential that the public have access through its media to "political intelligence" which equips it to make reasoned judgments on matters of public policy. Newspaper ownership, therefore, is a public trust and therefore subject to judgments of its performance in the public good.

The newspaper takes on the attributes of a public trust in four senses:

1) With the exception of narrowly defined conceptions of libel, obscenity and invasion of privacy, the newspaper's content is guaranteed immunity from government regulation. The "Pentagon Papers" decision of the Supreme Court was within this tradition.
2) The newspaper is a citizen's surrogate whose probing and informing roles have been traditionally conceived of as an extension of public interest and a guarantee of individual freedom. The Freedom of Information Act and California's Brown Act have formalized the notion of a right of access and created the setting in which the media perform with legal guarantees.
3) The freedom of the press actualizes other freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution–speech, assembly and petition.
4) The control of information leads to the control of opinion. Access to and control of the information media is a source of power.

Privilege and power create responsibility. In this sense, freedom of the press and ownership of the press are public trusts: the first to be defended, the second to be executed responsibly. As Los Angeles *Times* publisher Otis Chandler put it:

> We must state our opinions with firmness and strength, and maintain a sense of fairness by telling both sides of every issue, regardless of how controversial that issue is, or regardless of whether it involves friends of the owners of the newspaper, regardless of whether it involves any special interest group. We have to be free and we have to be independent, regardless of how much it hurts us to be so.[41]

The origin of the newspaper's immunities and the subject of its watchdogging have traditionally been government. Today, however, the concentration of corporate power and its policy-setting role in the mixed economy have added a new dimension to newspaper responsibility and a new threat to its independence. Its public trust challenges the press to report the activities of private enterprises with which it may share economic interests or upon which it depends for advertising.

Of importance are the newspaper's relations to government and the increasingly political or policy-making role played by private enterprise in the mixed economy of the corporate state. William L. Rivers has described the press and government as natural "adversaries."[42] Adversarity can be described as a relation of tension between press and government. This tension has several components: the conception of the press as the watchdog; the conflicting role demands of press and government, and the press as a participant or catalyst in the policy-making process.

In the mixed economy, the adversary stance is an appropriate role to extend to the coverage of the private sector where it enters the public policy process.

Three very concrete justifications for critical monitoring of the private sector will suffice. First, corporate power has reached a scale and concentration which make it the competitor of elected government in determining the substance and quality of life. Second, the size of corporations have thrust them into a planning role–organizing systems of supply and marketing–in which the corrective of market demand no longer applies. That planning role extends into the manipulation of public policy for institutional goals that may conflict with the private citizen's conceptions of the public good. And, third, no direct electoral check exists for the exercise of corporate power.

Obviously, the monitoring of private enterprise must be fair and even-handed. The jobs, taxes, and products or services of private enterprise are a critical component of the community welfare. General Electric, for one, examines what it calls "Community Loyalty" in making its plant citing decisions. Their comments indicate the need for scrupulous fairness:

> We watch to see if the thought leaders and other representatives in the community speak well of the *deserving* employers there or consider them whipping posts. Spokesmen for unions and other organizations, as well as individuals among clergymen, teachers, politicians and publishers can all have a very material effect for good or bad on the *cost of producing goods* and on the *amount and regularity* of the *sale* of those goods. A little noted fact is that public criticism of an employer–to the extent that it is believed–tends to cut down jobs for employees. Likewise–understanding, approval and warranted public praise of an employer tends to cut his costs and increase his sales–*and jobs.* (Italics theirs throughout.)[43]

In this situation–one which is aggravated by the newspaper's economic interest in a growing population and booming retail activity–press scrutiny of corporate actions is appropriately circumscribed to three areas of the mixed economy:

1) Press initiative in the probing and monitoring of corporate activity which involves public subsidy or public contracts.
2) Press initiative in the probing and monitoring of corporate activity which requires public policy action or public policy change.
3) Press monitoring in response to citizen initiative in questioning corporate activity in the community which is causing public debate, but is not subsumed by the areas of public subsidy, contract or policy action.

This framework for press coverage of corporate activities underlies an analysis of *Mercury-News* coverage of two environmental problems closely tied to urban growth and redevelopment: public transit and airport development.

Transit: Its Environmental Impact

Public transit in its several forms has two primary environmental impacts. First, it can serve to replace the private automobile with its pollution-generating internal combustion engine. Second, it can serve to concentrate land use in corridors and hubs and reduce the sprawl of auto-related land use patterns.

Between 1965 and 1970, the number of cars and trucks in the Bay Area increased faster than its population. By 1980, the San Jose Planning Department projects at least one million more cars in Santa Clara County than there are today. The threat of such a massive proliferation of internal combustion engines to aggravate pollution is obvious. Even with new pollution control equipment, the most optimistic predictions are for staying even with decline in air quality after 1990.

The Bay Area Air Pollution Control District figures estimate that four tons of air pollution is generated by 40 cars (an average cross-section of those on the road) traveling 1000 miles each. The rapidity of auto proliferation in a concentrated area and the vagaries of the weather in a Bay basin mandate a transportation substitute for the private car.

Furthermore, the private automobile generates the highest volume of emissions at the speeds associated with the start-and-stop driving of rush-hour congestion. It is these periods of congestion that mass transit is most capable of relieving because of the concentration of job locations in certain hubs and corridors where routing would be most feasible.

In this setting, the ecologically damaging aspects of urbanization are magnified: the diffusion of population and development threaten particularly vulnerable ecological habitats–the marshlands (80 percent of which have already been filled baywide), the estuaries, and, in chain reaction, the Bay, with its temperature- and oxygen-control implications for the entire valley. San Jose State ecologist Dr. Tom Harvey has expressed his professional opinion that urbanization in the Santa Clara Valley has already exceeded "the carrying capacity of its environment."[44]

Mass transit would stem some of the demand for street and freeway proliferation, concentrating urban activity more densely near its routes. The concentration of activity in already urbanized land would lessen the rate of increase of environmental stress. This point becomes critical when considered with interaction of environmental stresses from many sources: pollution, temperature change, removal of greenery, and biotic extermination. The removal of environmental stress at several interfaces of the eco-system becomes significant given the interactivity of biological systems.

Transit, however, as was discussed earlier, can be used as a device to raise property values and to force undesirable population elements from the central city–the poor, minorities and the aged–through either its condemnation and routing decisions or its effect upon housing costs. Planners must be cautious that public policy puts high priority upon the housing and relocation of the disadvantaged. In a very real sense, the housing and living conditions of people are the most pressing environmental priority.

Airport Development: Its Environmental Impact

The 1970 Federal Airport Development Act applies strict environmental standards to airport expansion or development using federal revenues.[45] A Santa Clara County planning official commented that: "This act *may* mean that no more urban airports are built in the United States."[46] The act requires that federally funded airport development seek siting alternatives which minimize:

1) Adverse effect upon fish and wildlife,
2) Adverse effect upon natural scenic and recreational assets,
3) Adverse effect upon water and air quality,
4) Inconsistency with the plans of planning agencies for development of the area.

Further, the federal law requires consultation with and agreement from surrounding communities.

The federal legislation offers only a glimpse of the environmental hazards of airport development. A more expanded list would also include:

1) Noise pollution,
2) Displacement of other land uses and pressure upon remaining open-space,
3) Disruption of flood plain, drainage, and run-off through grading adding to water pollution and erosion,
4) Extensive topographical alteration.

The seriousness of environmental effects of airport development depend on the frequency and type of aircraft operations. Jet operations–particularly long-distance jet flights with large aircraft–add significantly to the level of noise and air pollution in urban areas. The practice of dumping excess fuels immediately after take-off adds unburned jet fuel to the already polluted air of the metropolitan environment.

The problem of noise pollution is not so easily solved. The present design of jet aircraft engines makes noise control at the source virtually prohibitive; a new breed of jet engine, not simply modification of present types, is required. Development lag time is estimated at 20 years.[47]

Furthermore, airports are incompatible with all but heavy industrial land uses in the immediate vicinity. The removal of urban land from both usefulness and the tax roles creates greater pressure for the development of peripheral green-belt areas.

The environmental hazards of airports fly in the face of the rapidly increasing demand for air travel. In the decade 1953 to 1963, airline passengers increased 217% while population in California grew only 45% (BCDC report, p. 4).[48] Nationally, air cargo tonnage is increasing 20 percent each year (p. 7). The increase in air traffic is so rapid that the Bay Area will run out of air space for safe operation long before passenger and freight demand is exhausted.[49]

In determining the priorities of airport development, and environmental repair, it may be useful to note that only about 40 percent of the U.S. population has flown in commercial aircraft and that approximately 75 percent of commercial flights and 40 percent of general aviation flights are for business purposes. These considerations suggest the possible substitution of alternative forms of transportation such as

1) Ultra-high speed rail or vacuum transit substitutes in the most heavily traveled air corridors such as Los Angeles to the Bay Area;
2) The new breed of communication devices including picture phones, and interactive computers and on-line conferencing devices.

They also suggest the possibilities for peripheral location of airport facilities or the introduction of short-range but quick take-off aircraft such as the VTOL and STOL.

In the light of the environmental impact of transportation services, what was the newspaper coverage of transit and airport planning in San Jose?

Newspaper Performance: The Assessment of Conservationists and the Growth Establishment

It has been argued that the newspaper's public trust is to provide information that will enable citizens–if they choose–to make intelligent judgments on matters of public policy. The importance of newspaper quality is magnified in the complex urban setting in which massive and specialized information cannot be widely diffused by word of mouth or direct inquiry.

In the context of its public trust, public assessment of media performance is a critical measure of news quality.

It is easy for the academic–his hands unstained by printers ink, his performance undaunted by payrolls or press deadlines–to arrive at arbitrary and unreachable quality standards for news performance. More critical for the publisher, certainly, is the extent to which his readers feel confident that their news needs are being met on a day-to-day basis.

Working in this framework, evidence of reader assessment of the news performance of the San Jose *Mercury-News* becomes important. A purposive sample of "relevant publics" was sought. Because of the implications for growth and the environment of the transit and airport issues, the likely poles of the conservation and development spectrum were surveyed–realtors, Sierra Club members, Chamber of Commerce members and members of the militantly conservationist Save Our Valley Action Committee. These were publics who were likely to be concerned, informed, and vehement in their opposing opinions.

Official membership lists were obtained which included:

193 officers and committee members of the San Jose Real Estate Board.

147 members of the San Jose Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and six of its Action Councils (including Industrial Parks, Research Committee, Parking and Traffic Committee, Streets and Highways Committee, Transportation Committee and Aviation Committee).

52 members of the Save Our Valley Action Committee with homes in San Jose.

242 members of the Sierra Club with home addresses in the Zip Code area nearest the airport flight patterns and noise hazard. One third of those with telephone listings were selected randomly for interview.

92 Sierra Club members from the 95120 Zip Code area, a hillside area identified as having the smallest percentage of signers of a petition against downtown airport expansion.

Only persons with home telephone numbers listed in the directory were called to avoid the unreliability and awkwardness of seeking opinions in the workplace environment. Persons were dropped from the sample when no home listing was available and after no response on four calls, no more than two of which were placed on a single evening.

The completed survey includes:

41 members of the Chamber of Commerce
44 members of the Board of Realty
47 members of SOVAC
42 members of the Sierra Club from the 95120 Zip Code area
43 Sierra Club members from the 95125 Zip Code area.

The telephone interviews were conducted during a two week period which was not intruded by airport or transit news, attacks on the press by the Vice President and before the Selling of the Pentagon controversy.

No mention of student violence was made by any of our respondents, nor did the refusal rate climb during militancy at Stanford which occurred midway through the polling procedure.

The results of the purposive sampling can obviously not be generalized to the population of San Jose. The sample is uniformly skewed toward upper income respondents. It has a miniscule number of Spanish-surnamed respondents compared to a San Jose average of close to 20 percent. It overwhelmingly supported mass transit (209 to 13), whereas the voters of San Jose rejected the Transit District ballot measure in 1970. With some confidence however it can be argued that it represents a fair sampling of highly relevant publics for news of airport and transit plans.

Each respondent was asked to identify the local newspaper read most regularly. In reporting the results the assessment of the *Mercury* and *News* was combined because the papers produce a combined Sunday edition, their staff and news are virtually interchangeable, their editorial pages reflect their common ownership, and there was no difference in assessment of balance or completeness from paper to paper. Thus, the assessments will be reported for the *Mercury-News,* the name of the Sunday edition.

The sample was not large enough to secure a reasonable number of respondents for analysis of the weekly San Jose *Sun.*

To plumb our respondents' assessment of news coverage with a uniform definition of completeness and balance they were asked:

"Would you say that (your newspaper's) news about airport/transit plans has been balanced in the sense that their news reports don't try to sway the reader to take one viewpoint over another?"

And: "Has their news on airport expansion/transit been complete in the sense that you feel they give an adequate understanding of the pros and cons of airport/transit plans?"

The results will be examined for two concurrent interests: 1) the direct results of polling the different memberships and 2) significantly different results *between* the assessments of the different memberships and different opinion holders.

Given the census approach to *each* membership the reader can be confident that the statistics are more representative than would be the case if such small numbers had been sampled from a large and heterogeneous population. The differences *between* populations will be tested by the Chi Square test of significance.

By membership, the assessment of the completeness of airport coverage was:

	Complete	Not Complete	No Opinion/Can't Say
Chamber of Commerce	18	14	9
Realtors	15	13	13
SOVAC	6	21	12
Sierra Club Zip 91525	9	13	14
Sierra Club Zip 91520	8	18	17

The assessment of airport news balance was:

	Balanced	Not Balanced	No Opinion/Can't Say
Chamber of Commerce	23	11	7
Realtors	19	18	2
SOVAC	11	21	7
Sierra Club 91525	16	9	12
Sierra Club 91520	20	14	8

On the completeness of transit news the assessment was:

	Complete	Not Complete	No Opinion/Can't Say
Chamber of Commerce	24	11	5
Realtors	19	18	2
SOVAC	11	21	7
Sierra Club Both Zips	32	25	17

On the balance of transit news this assessment was found:

	Balanced	Not Balanced	No Opinion/Can't Say
Chamber of Commerce	22	11	6
Realtors	19	15	4
SOVAC	12	18	9
Sierra Club Both Zips	31	27	17

Perhaps the most interesting and telling result revealed is the high level of discontent with news performance. Only in the Chamber of Commerce sample did more than fifty percent of the respondents think the *Mercury-News* was balanced and complete in their coverage of either issue.

Chi Square tests of statistical significance detected significant differences in the assessment of airport news balance and airport news completeness *between* members of SOVAC and Chamber members ($p < .02$) and realtors ($p < .1$). There was also a significant difference between Chamber members and hillside conservationists in their assessment of the completeness of airport coverage ($p < .05$). The differences between SOVAC members and both realtors and Chamber members combined remain significant among those who described themselves as "very concerned" ($p < .1$). Cell sizes were too small to test this with hillside conservationists.

The differences in assessment of the balance of airport coverage between realtors, Chamber members and Sierra Club members were not statistically significant.

In examining the airport positions of the entire sample population it was found that opposing the airport predicted a greater likelihood of finding coverage unbalanced ($p < .05$). The statistical analysis was performed with collapsed categories, but the total survey breakdown is offered here:

	Balanced	Not Balanced	No Opinion/Can't Say
Favor airport development in present location	34	26	14
Oppose airport development in present location	31	32	25
Favor relocation	12	5	8
Don't know	6	2	5

(In arriving at the significant difference, airport opponents were compared against all others)

Position on the airport, however, did not predict the assessment of the completeness of newspaper coverage.

All respondents were also asked the most persuasive arguments that brought them to their position on airport development. The responses were coded in three categories: environmental arguments; economic and growth arguments; transportation-need arguments. Because of the possibility of multiple responses the data were divided into binary codes using each of the mentions against a category of "other" responses which would include the two other categories or uncodable responses.

Among those who mentioned environmental arguments (noise pollution, air pollution, environment, ecology or land use) this assessment of news performance was found:

Balanced	Not Balanced	No Opinion
35	36	29
Complete	**Not Complete**	**No Opinion**
25	46	28

Among those who mentioned growth or the economy this assessment of the *Mercury-News* performance was found:

Balanced	Not Balanced	No Opinion
31	17	12
Complete	**Not Complete**	**No Opinion**
23	23	14

Although the assessments are patently skewed, the differences are not significant by Chi Square test. Position on the airport issue predicts the assessment of balance in coverage, but it cannot be predicted that those who make environmental arguments on the airport issue will be more likely to find coverage less balanced or complete than those who were persuaded by growth or economic arguments.

These results would indicate that there is no statistically significant tendency for those making environmental arguments on the airport issue to perceive that the *Mercury-News* omits news of support to their concern with environmental hazards in a more systematic way than any other group perceives such omissions. If the *Mercury-News did* systematically bias its reports against environmental information, it would be expected that the perception of imbalance and incompleteness would exist at a significantly higher rate among this group than among those who mention growth or economic arguments. This is not the case. Although the rate of assessment is skewed in this direction, it is not statistically significant.

The more critical assessment of news performance among those who oppose airport development and among members of SOVAC must still be accounted for.

Differences in the information-seeking behavior of those who favor the airport compared to those who oppose it suggest an explanation. Respondents who identified conservation organizations and the League of Women Voters as their "most reliable" source of airport information were most likely to find news coverage incomplete ($p < .05$). Although not as clear-cut, the same pattern appears in the assessment of balance among those who consult conservation organizations and publications ($p < .15$).

Thus, it appears that people who are privy to environmental organizations and value them as their most reliable sources feel that the *Mercury-News* coverage does not fully probe the environmental cons of airport plans and that their coverage, on balance, leans toward a pro-development stance—although there is not a feeling that the environmental hazards of airport planning are systematically short-changed in news coverage. The substance of SOVAC interviews supports this interpretation. There was a suspicion that the *Mercury-News* favors the growth ethic—*building in* a growth orientation but not *leaving out* environmental concerns.

Additionally, as would be predicted from earlier research (See Appendix VI), those who identified themselves as "very concerned" were more critical of news performance. The high rate of concern among SOVAC conservationists, their high valuation of membership information sources and their suspicion of *Mercury-News* boosterism seems to account for their greater likelihood of being critical of newspaper performance.

On the transit issue, there were significant differences between the assessment of balance and completeness between members of SOVAC and the Chamber of Commerce ($p < .05$). In this case, the assessment by SOVAC members tended to include the apology that the *Mercury-News* coverage favored their pro-transit position.

Because of the small number of respondents who opposed transit development in Santa Clara County, it was impossible to test for a relationship between transit position and news assessment.

Further, no significant differences appeared in the assessment of news coverage between respondents who mentioned environmental, economic or transportation/congestion arguments for their positions. Nor were there any differences in skew.

In comparing the data for transit and airport coverage, we must conclude that the respondents felt that the depth of environmental coverage was greater for the transit issue than the airport. For those respondents who mentioned environmental issues as persuasive in arriving at their position on the two issues, the poll revealed this assessment of the completeness of coverage:

	Complete	Not Complete	No Opinion/Can't Say
Airport	25	46	28
Transit	28	26	13 ($p < .1$)

The results are obviously not so clear in the assessment of balance:

	Balance	Not Balanced	No Opinion/Can't Say
Airport	35	36	29
Transit	23	28	17

In summary, environmentalists were most likely to find the *Mercury-News* airport coverage lacking in completeness and leaning toward their pro-environment stance on transit.

There was sufficient negative assessment from realtors and Chamber of Commerce members, however, that it cannot be concluded that the *Mercury-News* systematically excludes news of interest to the conservationist community. Rather, imbalance and incompleteness are perceived from both ends of the growth and development spectrum—from *both* environmentalists *and* the growth establishment. What differences in assessment that do exist seem to be accounted for by a combination of issue position, level of concern, and the membership-oriented information-seeking patterns of conservationists rather than by a perception of the omission of news content of particular interest to conservationists.

Editorial Comment on the Airport Controversy: The *Mercury* and *Sun*

The editorial page has traditionally been conceived of as the vehicle of ownership's opinion. Here management is expected to make its brief on the issues of the day—expressing its opinion on the conflicts and directions of public policy. Increasingly, the editorial has also become a means of offering context and perspective on matters of controversy.

There is a tension between the two functions of the editorial which arises from the presentation of management opinion while simultaneously offering a fair perspective on the conflicting goals, values, and facts that are argued by the opponents of management opinion.

In this setting, it can be expected at minimum that the editorial page offer a cogent and persuasive declaration of the newspaper's opinion and the merits of its case. Additionally, the editorial page should offer:

1) A presentation of both the pros and cons of policy—and the values which undergird them,
2) A presentation of alternatives to policy—particularly when the paper opposes a policy,
3) An understanding of who is involved in the policy-making process.

(As noted in Appendix VI, categories of specific content which would serve these functions were derived from the planning process. A copy of the coding sheet, complete with marginals, appears in the same appendix.)

In May 1968, the Stanford Research Institute reported the results of a "Survey of Airline Passengers Departing the San Francisco Bay Area." The survey showed that "Santa Clara County now has more residents using commercial air services than does any other Bay Area county, with 25.4 percent of the total residents surveyed."

The survey was jointly commissioned and funded by the City of San Jose and the San Jose *Mercury-News*. The SRI report praised the city and paper for "recognizing the potential planning value of current local origin and destination data." The report certainly did that: it documented the furiously growing demand for air travel in Santa Clara County and its rapidly increasing percentage of travel users. In 1950, Santa Clara County accounted for only 9.2 percent of domestic flight passengers, but by 1968, it had leaped to 25.5 percent. During the same period, San Francisco's share of domestic air travel passengers declined from 45.1 percent to 18.3 percent.

As *Mercury-News* executives explained, they had joined in commissioning the study to determine airport planning needs. A second benefit, however, was correctly anticipated. The SRI study resulted in a massive shift in airline advertising from San Francisco papers to the *Mercury* with its saturation of Santa Clara County. Airline ad budgets were realigned to more accurately reflect the readership patterns of disembarking passengers. *News* Managing Editor Paul Conroy explained that the passenger data helped the Ridder papers capture 70 percent of the San Francisco *Chronicle*'s airline ad budget.

With this cash register success, tourism beckoning, and Business Manager P. A. Ridder promoting a sports arena-convention center complex for downtown San Jose, it is no wonder that the *Mercury* editorially supported airport development in Santa Clara County. There were new airlines and new routes to be secured–with new ad budgets. There were a potential 25 to 30 million passengers to serve by 1993–no reason, after all, why the spin-off revenue from conventions and visiting firemen should go to San Francisco. And there is more than a little civic pride in having modern–and big–airport facilities.

It is not surprising, then, that the *Mercury* carried 17 editorials in 1968 plumping for expansion of the Municipal Airport and pressing for development of a "twin" facility stretching toward the Bay in the Alviso mudflats.

What is surprising is an eerie silence during the year 1969–a year of substantial public outcry on the environmental hazards of airport development. From December 28, 1968 to February 2, 1970 the *Mercury* did not editorialize on the subject of airport expansion or improvement. On April 27, 1970 the *Mercury* tacked back and advised that:

> The San Jose City Council should, however reluctantly, abandon plans for a mammoth international airport on the Alviso-Milpitas mudflats and concentrate instead on expansion of San Jose Municipal Airport.

Why was the *Mercury*'s editorial page silent for more than a year? The answer, from *Mercury-News* editor Paul Conroy, was that a lot of planning elements–funding, location, political support, airspace–had to get worked out. That kind of planning, he said, requires privacy. He acknowledged that the *Mercury*'s silence was giving airport planners the "low profile" that it takes to work up a development package and put the political pieces together. The strategy, Conroy said, was developed after a conference with Airport Manager James Nissen.

As a development strategy, the *Mercury*'s self-imposed editorial silence cannot be faulted. For example, urban renewal experts Bellush and Hausknecht point out that urban redevelopment has "successfully" replaced old structures with new ones, where negotiations with developers and the federal government were nearly complete before either local politicos or the public itself was let in on the projects. "There seems to be a possible correlation between 'success' and 'secrecy,'" Bellush concluded.[50]

In this case, however, the more serious question is the appropriateness of *secrecy* as a publication's strategy for realizing *editorial* goals. Development, of course, is an appropriate policy for the paper to support editorially. It is an arguable, if sometimes self-interested, judgment of the public good. However, promoting development through silence rather than supportive argument is not in the best interest of the public. Nor is it in the long-run best interest of a newspaper which wishes to retain the confidence of its readers.

In this situation, it is appropriate to examine how persuasively the *Mercury* made their *public* case for airport expansion in 1968: how successful was the *Mercury* in arguing for the location of a regional airport in San Jose in the language of public interest?

First, the content analysis examined the *Mercury*'s defense of airport development in the light of environmental hazards. Environmental themes were examined in the broad brush of vague references to "environment," "ecology" and "conservation," and in more specific discussions of the impact on air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, land use, and population growth treated as an environmental stress. In only one editorial was an "environmental" issue raised: the urgency of purchasing land before it is committed to industrial use. In the strictest sense, the *Mercury* did not treat land competition as an environmental issue. However, competition for the use of urban land in short supply invariably has environmental implications–for open space, biotic stress, pollution levels, and urban amenity.

Not once in 1968 did *Mercury* editorials address the problems of noise pollution or air pollution. Nor did they critically assess the environmental effects of population and economic growth associated with the airport's expanding operations.

In resuming editorial comment in 1970, the *Mercury* made passing mention of airport noise problems in one editorial. In supporting expansion at the present airport site, the *Mercury* said:

> By lengthening existing runways, even the largest jet transports can be brought in over downtown San Jose, at a higher altitude than is now the case, thus reducing engine noise.

This backhanded reference was the only mention of jet noise in the three-year period of analysis. The possibility of reducing jet noise by altering the approach angle is hotly contested by airplane pilots: both structural inadequacy in aircraft and passenger discomfort are cited as adverse safety factors that make the solution questionable.

What then did the *Mercury* fill its editorials with?

There is a surprising absence of persuasive argument on the economic benefits of airport development. The *Mercury* points out that airport revenue will pay for airport bonds; that centrality of location is critical for both passengers and shippers. However, there is no discussion of either direct employment by the facility or of the multiplier effect of airport development on employment and economic opportunity. The overweening emphasis is on the inevitability of growth in airline traffic–and the necessity of planning for it. Thus, the *Mercury* offers neither a convincing portrait of the economic benefits nor a defense of the environmental hazards of airport expansion. It does make clear the economic viability of the present airport.

Since the *Mercury* editorials emphasize planning for growth, it is reasonable to ask whether they pose alternatives to either downtown airport development or the proposed Superport in the Alviso mudflats. The discussion of alternatives is, after all, central to the planning process. The *Mercury*'s own argument for careful planning justifies such a prescriptive approach to editorial content.

Only two alternatives are raised by the *Mercury* editorials: 1) commercial aviation at the Navy's Moffett Field and 2) a single mention of the possibility of a Gilroy location for the Superport. Neither alternative is treated in its environmental aspects. Both are dismissed: Moffett because the Navy is unwilling; the south county site because of its distance. Transit connection to a site on the metropolitan periphery is not discussed although this alternative seems to be favored by the Federal Aviation Agency as the most reasonable response to the conflicting mandates of airport congestion, airspace limitations, and environmental impact.

In the context of the close strategy relationship between *Mercury* management and the airport commissioner it was not expected that editorials would assess the disadvantages of airport proposals. That was the case. Only in urging the city council to discard the superport plan and move ahead on municipal airport expansion did the *Mercury* editorial page mention opposition to the airport. Even then, the content of the opposition argument was not discussed.

In summary, it must be concluded that the *Mercury*'s editorial treatment of airport location and development makes an inconclusive argument for their expansion-minded stance. The *Mercury* editorials exhaustively document the increasing numbers of air passengers in Santa Clara County. From that documentation, however, it cannot be concluded that the wisest planning alternative is the *location of a regional airport in San Jose.* From the standpoint of sound planning, the location decision must weigh the negatives of environmental pollution, limited airspace, the competition for scarce urban land, and the welfare of surrounding communities. These negatives are largely ignored by the *Mercury.*

The failings of the *Mercury*'s editorial treatment of airport expansion are placed in sharp relief by the articulation and depth of the San Jose *Sun*'s editorial comment.

Like *Mercury* management, *Sun* Publisher Morton Levine was actively and personally involved in the airport controversy. Levine was a member of the San Jose Goals Committee which concluded that:

> The development of the San Jose Airport at its present location should be restricted because of its inherent limitations and disadvantages–the two major ones now being proximity to the downtown core area which causes building height restrictions as well as noise, and proximity to residential areas which cause noise and other flight and approach problems resulting in physical and mental discomfort to the persons nearby. Curtailment of development of the present airport is not enough. More suitable solutions must be investigated: 1) Either reduce the current airplane handling capacity to size of planes which will not cause limitations on downtown core building or interference with normal activites, or 2) Abandon the current location and relocate the airport in an area which does not have as many physical disadvantages.

Future research will raise the problems for news coverage that are created when a publisher is visibly and actively involved in community politics. The *Sun*'s editorials in 1969 and 1970 make clear that the publisher's involvement did not hinder the editorial page from clarion opposition to airport development plans. One of the *Sun*'s obvious editorial goals was to keep the pot of controversy bubbling. In both position and intent the *Sun*'s editorial page was at direct odds with the *Mercury*'s.

In the context of the *Sun*'s opposition, the greatest emphasis is put on their performance in delineating alternatives and in discussing the impact of airport development on the environment and economy, rather than how often they raised arguments which challenge the wisdom of airport plans–which follows obviously from their opposition stance.

In 1969, the *Sun* ran six editorials on airport planning and an equal number in 1970. Because 1969 and 1970 were the years of greatest public controversy and because there was no editorial silence to account for, *Sun* editorials were not examined in 1968.

In its 1969 editorials, the *Sun* emphasized environmental arguments against the airport: the problem of competition for urban land; noise and air pollution; the multiplier effect of airport development in increasing population growth. No mention was made of the positive economic impact of airport development; the competition between airport and industrial land use *was* emphasized.

In 1970, the *Sun* continued its environmental attack on airport location plans, but broadened its scope to cite the positive economic arguments *for* airport development. The emphasis remained upon noise and air pollution and the incompatibility of the proposed mudflat site with other land uses–industrial, residential, commercial, ground transportation, and the proposed South Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Lacking in the *Sun* editorials was a discussion of *how* noise and air pollution are hazardous to human health or the biota, or the *levels* at which environmental pollution becomes injurious. In only one editorial were the problems and techniques of noise suppression discussed. The land-use compatibility arguments were more conclusive, emphasizing the relationships between planning, balanced development, sprawl, and land scarcity.

Throughout, the *Sun* advanced alternatives to airport development, including:

1. Commercial use of Moffett Field,
2. Ground transit as a substitute for air service in heavily traveled corridors,
3. Improvements in aircraft technology such as STOL and VTOL aircraft,
4. Location of airport facilities on the periphery of the metropolitan population area with a rapid transit connection to San Jose,
5. The relocation of general aviation aircraft at subsidiary fields.

In one editorial, the *Sun* charged that the *Mercury* had released a poll of public opinion on the airport too late to validly represent public opinion. The editorial surmised that the release was timed for political potency at the expense of polling accuracy.

With no stake in airline ad revenues, the *Sun* attempted to deflate the argument that the pressure of increasing passenger and freight traffic demanded the development of a national-international airport in San Jose. The *Sun* emphasized alternatives to the San Jose-Los Angeles route which accounts for 80 percent of San Jose's present air traffic. In response to saturation of airport facilities in Oakland and San Francisco, the *Sun* urged a regional airport located on the urban periphery. The approach contrasts sharply with the *Mercury*'s San Jose-centered response to new airlines routes typified by this editorial headline: "Today New York; Tomorrow Hong Kong?"

With hindsight, the airspace limitation warnings of the FAA, the environmental protection provisions of the 1970 Airport Revenue and Development Act and the State Airport Land Use Act seem to have confirmed the wisdom of the *Sun*'s regional-mindedness.

Given hindsight, and in the light of its articulate presentation of planning alternatives and an understanding of the impact of airport plans, it must be concluded that the *Sun* distinguished itself editorially. However, the absence of a discussion of how pollution endangers health and the biota is an instance of a distressing lack of perspective. One *Sun* editorial and two *Mercury* editorials are offered here as examples.

> 'HARD LINE' FOR JETPORT–San Jose's top administrators have thrown down the gauntlet. They want the big new international airport in San Jose and the southern edge of the bay is where such a facility ought to go, they say.
>
> Now it remains for the city councilmen to stick their necks out.

A growing concern about the damage to this valley's living environment has dramatically reached even the most moss-backed politician. Yet the city's planning director and its airport manager audaciously insist that if San Jose is going to be the "major" urban center, it must have a "major airport."

This brand of 1920's boomerism logically demands that if our city is to be "major" in every way, it also should forthwith develop some black ghettoes, and every other earmark of the big urban center.

It is ironic that the new report just given to the city council recommending the big airport at the edge of the bay comes forth at the same time a report has been sent to Congress by the U.S. Dept. of Interior recommending a federal wildlife refuge in the same area.

The collision course is becoming more apparent every day. Those who would push our area into the abyss of permanent smog, congestion, noise and nuisance take no cognizance of the perils they court. "Progress" is defined only in terms of how much money it means to those in a position to reap the harvest, or the personal power-empires it will create.

But there is a growing host on the other course. That course that would preserve some of the peacefulness, the beauty, the privacy and pace that attracted people to this valley.

A giant jetport will finish off the destruction of those amenities with a flourish.

We don't believe the residents and voters of this area want to seal their fate, and that of their children with this kind of crude stupidity.

Some things can be done right now.

City councilmen must be alerted to the public's feeling about the living environment.

Support must be organized to bring to everyone the true impact of this fantastic boondoggle in the mudflats. A citizen's group now being formed will be opening an office next week. We shall be listing their phone number and address for volunteers to participate.

On Wednesday night (Jan. 14) at McCabe Hall in the civic auditorium a community forum will look at San Jose's long term goals. If you can, you should be there to add your voice to the outcry against this monstrous blunder.

The city planning director was right when he called the new report on San Jose's jetport site a "hard line." It make no mention at all about the environmental dangers, makes no reference to the need to find out the consequences. It is a recommendation to the council for immediate action that would disregard every vestige of cooperative regional action, much less rational action, It totally ignores the ecology of the bay, which contributes to the climate, the health and much more to all our well-being.

As we said, the gauntlet is now down.

If San Joseans don't pick up the challenge, no one else can help them (despite the grave impact on neighboring cities). The valley we lose will be our own!–*Sun,* January 14, 1970

AIR TRAFFIC: IT KEEPS ON GROWING–The Bay Area Study of Aviation Requirements has concluded, not surprisingly, that in a very few years Santa Clara County is going to generate the bulk of the region's air traffic, both passenger and freight.

The nature of the county's industrial base and its rate of growth makes any other conclusion unlikely at best. The real question, of course, is: what to do about it?

Whether San Jose Municipal Airport can or should be expanded, or whether a new, super-airport should be developed, one fact is clear: unless some serious planning is done now a lot of passengers and freight may be inadvertently grounded by 1980. Existing airports in the area simply will be unable to handle the volume of traffic that the region's growth is certain to generate by then.–*Mercury,* April 7

EXPAND S.J. MUNICIPAL AIRPORT NOW–The San Jose City Council should, however reluctantly, abandon plans for a mammoth international airport on the Alviso-Milpitas mudflats and concentrate instead on expansion of San Jose Municipal airport.

The decision is not one dictated by economics; the super-jet airport would almost surely pay its way and then some. The decision is dictated by practical politics. The opposition to the new super-airport plans is large, vocal and well organized. Most important probably, it includes Rep. Don Edwards (D-San Jose), whose weight with the Federal Aviation Agency in Washington should not be underestimated.

As a practical matter, it would most probably be impossible to obtain the massive federal funds that would be needed for the new airport in the face of this opposition.

That leaves the City Council with only one practical alternative. It must expand the existing airport–and rather quickly at that. Happily, San Jose Municipal Airport is capable of expansion in a way that will make it both more utilitarian and less of a nuisance, in terms of noise.

By lengthening existing runways, even the largest jet transports can be brought in over downtown San Jose at a higher altitude than is now the case, thus reducing engine noise. By decking over Guadalupe river, parking aprons can be extended to all sides of the present terminal building, thus increasing the number of planes that can be loaded and unloaded simultaneously.

This decision would make it possible, also, to maximize parking and other ground facilities needed to serve the airport's present and future patrons.

In the circumstances that exist today, it is the best decision the Council can make.–*Mercury*, April 23.

Editorial Treatment of Public Transit: 1969 and 1970

The *Mercury*'s editorial treatment of transit was both extensive and intensive.

In 1969, the paper ran 23 editorials on the subject of public transit needs. In 1970, the number was 29. The volume of editorials peaked prior to elections on November 4, 1970 and September 16, 1969: voter approval of Proposition A (in both cases) would have established a County-Wide Public Transit District. Despite the election peaks, the *Mercury* gave persistent year-round coverage of transit as a means of reducing air pollution and congestion, and of the county-wide tax district as a means of bailing out San Jose's privately owned but publicly subsidized bus system.

The *Mercury*'s transit editorials were more than lip service: the paper donated $3,750 to the 1970 election campaign for Proposition A. The list of major donors to the 1970 transit campaign suggests the confluence of interest on the part of what we have called San Jose's "growth establishment":

Mercury-News	$3750
Chamber of Commerce Trust Fund	$4000
National City (Bus) Lines	$2000
San Jose Real Estate Board	$ 500
Westgate Shopping Center	$ 250
Eastgate Shopping Center	$ 500
Town & Country Village	$ 500
PG&E	$ 500
General Electric	$1000
IBM	$1000
FMC Corporation	$ 500
San Jose Clearinghouse Association	$1000
PT&T	$ 500
League of Women Voters	$ 100

The San Jose chairman of the transit campaign, Brooks T. Mancini, said that his approach to corporate donors was to emphasize the large amount of land that was unproductively tied up in parking spaces. "Though I personally could not promise," he said, "I felt that if the transportation system existed, zoning could be changed to permit more office buildings, factories, or what have you."

As directly in the *Mercury*'s interest would have been the development of transit routes which invigorated both the downtown and regional shopping centers on the periphery. Further, the new district would have relieved property tax pressures in San Jose by shifting the burden of subsidizing San Jose's bus service (National City Lines) to a county-wide tax base and federal demonstration project dollars. And, additionally, bus routes focusing on San Jose would have strengthened its position as the regional headquarters and service center of the South Bay. All would redound to the advertising, circulation, and tax benefit of the *Mercury* while creating a downtown cosmopolite image which allows a paper to garner Madison Avenue national advertising clients.

Support for transit from a confederation of Mexican-American organizations (La Raza Unida), the League of Women Voters, and the militantly environmentalist Save Our Valley Action Committee gave the Proposition A election all the blandishments of a campaign for motherhood and apple pie. Opposition to Proposition A came from the United Taxpayers, a taxpayers' revolt organization which drew its leadership from the American Independent Party.

The campaign was waged in the leadership echelons of San Jose; it was lost in the blue and white collar precincts of middle income voters who were unwilling to be taxed for the other guy's apple pie.

Mancini blames the defeat of Proposition A on "too much Ph.D."–an overemphasis on the environmental and financing aspects of the transit measure, and not enough emphasis on its utility to the average suburban voter with two cars.

If Mancini's assessment is correct, the *Mercury*'s editorial efforts were misplaced, for they too placed heavy emphasis on finance, environment and freeway proliferation–and less on documenting the utility of transit to the average voter that would compensate for his additional tax burden.

In 1969, 11 of the *Mercury*'s 23 editorials dealt with transit finance; three mentioned air pollution; two mentioned noise pollution; three mentioned mobility for people now lacking it. Only two dealt with savings for people with cars through greater efficiency or lower costs.

In 1970, nine editorials dealt with the financing of the transit district; 12 dealt with the subject of air pollution reductions from transit; one dealt with the land-use ramifications of transit service. Five mentioned savings to the car-owner and two mentioned the tension of driving congested freeways, with only one mentioning mobility for people now without transportation.

Rather clearly, *Mercury* editorials were not dealing with the concerns and objections that the public has to transit: only twice was the question of whether people would shift from cars to transit raised in 1970 and not at all in 1969; only twice was the likely cost of the transit system specified in 1970 and only once in 1969; only once was the problem of providing realistic and profitable public transit in a scattered, low-density area mentioned in 1970, never in 1969. And only once, in 1969, was a ban on the internal combustion engine raised as an alternative means of controlling exhaust emissions. Instead the emphasis was placed at the more visceral level of smog and traffic jams.

From a planning perspective, the most serious shortcoming of the *Mercury*'s editorial treatment was the paucity of discussion of the relationship between transportation and land-use patterns. The paper noted that buses would facilitate getting *to* work and shopping centers. The argument is not convincing when people are coming *from* homes scattered over an extremely low-density land use configuration where present bus service is sporadic and uncomfortable at best. The narrow range of profitable bus routes in a few dense urban corridors deserved more discussion before transit could be presented as a panacea for smog and congestion. The problems deserved more thoughtful discussion and argumentation. This they received in an editorial of January 19, 1970. In the heat of the election campaign this perspective—and its persuasive caution—was lost.

Without shifts in the density of land-use, the immediate benefit of improved transit service would accrue to users, employers, and merchants located at the hubs of a few dense corridors. While public transit would provide mobility in the central city for many now lacking it, it seems unlikely that it would ease very much of the reliance on the private car for reaching scattered destinations on a regular timetable—at least not without massive subsidy. This too, deserved discussion and rebuttal. In this context, the frequency of environmental themes in the *Mercury*'s editorials evidences more salesmanship than solution.

The comparison with the paucity of environmental themes in airport editorials is perhaps more than just interesting.

Environmental Themes: 1969 and 1970 Editorials

	Number of airport editorials in which theme appears	Number of transit editorials in which theme appears
Noise pollution	1	2
Air pollution	0	15
Land use considerations	0	1
Population growth treated as an environmental hazard	0	0

The absence of environmental concern on the airport issue and its redundancy at a low level of specificity on the transit issue are not flattering to the *Mercury.* The environmental hazards of airport development were given wide public airing—including a scathing denunciation of siting and expansion plans by the Santa Clara County Medical Society. The paper could hardly have been unaware of the environmental issues.

More flattering to the *Mercury* editors was their readiness to take on the highway lobby and the automobile industry. In attacking the values and politics of the car-oriented metropolis, the *Mercury* evinced a high level of environmental commitment.

Two editorials are offered here as examples of excellence. (Appendix VI offers the theme coded in all editorials in 1969 and 1970—evidence of the *Mercury*'s failure to consistently grapple with the problems and complexity of transit planning on the editorial page):

PRESSURES FOR TRANSIT–Rapid transit's day may be approaching in California. It will be a welcome advent in every metropolitan area in the state, including urban Santa Clara County.

Transit has been neither popular nor profitable in California cities in recent years for a number of good reasons–low density population patterns, the convenience of the private automobile and the generally excellent system of streets, highways and freeways.

Some of these reasons are beginning to lose their compelling nature as California enters the Seventies. Comparatively speaking, population patterns remain low-density, but the open spaces are filling up. In absolute numbers, the cities are becoming true urban complexes. This trend is not likely to be reversed in the future; more than likely it will accelerate.

The automobile is still a convenience, but it is more than that, it is the prime producer of air pollution, and it has generated the heaviest rate of spending on road construction in the state's history. The freeways are still magnificent engineering feats, but they are no match for the ever-proliferating automobile. Traffic jams are more and more common and more and more irritating.

Further, the glut of automobiles in California has not made them less expensive either to buy or to operate. As the road system improved, the pressure was on Detroit to produce larger, more powerful cars that could cover more distance in a day than ever before. Bigger, more powerful cars cost more money, both to buy and to fuel.

As more and more cars jammed California's ever-improving highways and freeways, it was inevitable that more and more of them would be involved in accidents. This has pushed insurance premiums to near-prohibitive levels, loading still another "mobility tax" onto the individual.

The decentralization of industry and of a great deal of retail commerce contributed still further to the problem, making it necessary for families to own two or more cars; this trend also worsened smog, made it more difficult for public transportation systems to operate at a profit. It gave them longer routes and fewer potential customers.

All of this taken together seems to have produced a counter-pressure. The evidence is still tentative and far from conclusive, but it is hard evidence, not wishful thinking.

In San Jose last week, the State Constitution Revision Commission recommended unfreezing gasoline tax funds for transit and smog control purposes; until now, these funds have been reserved exclusively for road construction and maintenance.

In Sacramento, Sen. James R. Mills (D–San Diego) was named chairman of the powerful Senate Transportation Committee. Mills is a firm advocate of mass transit. His predecessors on the Transportation Committee have been equally firm freeway advocates.

In Santa Clara County, the Transportation Policy Committee has set out to sample public opinion in depth and produce a mass transportation package that the voters want and are willing to support financially.

These are as yet relatively uncoordinated steps, but they are almost certain to mesh at some point in the future, given the nature of the "automobile pinch" on the average citizen and his reaction to it.

It is still too early to say what precise form public transit will take here or in California's other newly-developing urban complexes. Plans will have to be tailored to the needs of each individual community, of course, but it seems fairly safe to say at this point that some kind of mass public transportation system is on the way.

The pressures for it are too great and too pervasive to be denied indefinitely.

A BIG STEP FORWARD–The California Legislature this week set in train what could prove to be the most far-reaching and significant environmental preservation program yet attempted in this state.

Specifically, the Legislature approved for submission to the voters in November a constitutional amendment permitting gasoline tax revenue to be diverted into rapid transit and smog control research.

> The California Constitution now requires that all gas tax funds be spent on freeway and highway construction and maintenance. Needless to say, the proposed amendment approved yesterday was fought bitterly by the highway lobby in Sacramento, and it is only realistic to expect that huge sums will be spent by the lobby to defeat the amendment at the polls in November.
>
> The people, however, are not likely to be put off.
>
> Assemblyman George Milias (R-Gilroy), a co-author of the proposed amendment, put it this way:
>
> "We don't have enough dollars, we never will have enough dollars, to build all the freeways needed to move all the people of California. The only solution is to move to transportation systems which can move the people of California."
>
> The point is well-taken, and it is precisely the point that will ensure the vigorous and expensive opposition of the highway lobby, a loose-knit association of oil companies, construction firms and automobile-related business interest. It was the highway lobby that managed to get the gas tax limitation frozen into the constitution in 1938, and this economic boon will not be given up by the highway lobby without a bitter fight.
>
> However, the people, including those in Santa Clara County who are choking on smog, have virtually no public transportation and endure frustrating traffic jams daily, are more likely to be interested in helping themselves than in preserving the profits of the petroleum-automobile-concrete Complex. The voters almost surely will approve the proposed constitutional amendment overwhelmingly.
>
> Specifically, it permits the voters of any county to divert up to 25 percent of the gas tax collected in their area to other forms of transportation. This could mean buses or rail transit or both. At present, the 7-cents-a-gallon gas tax is split almost 50-50 between the state and the counties in which it is collected; the state's share average about $800 million a year for freeway and highway construction and maintenance.
>
> Since an estimated 60 percent of all the air pollution in California is caused by the automobile, anything that encourages less reliance on the private automobile helps clean up the air as well as unclog the streets and highways.
>
> Approval of this proposed constitutional amendment by the Legislature is almost enough to excuse that body of its other derelictions of duty, which have been many and serious this session.

The San Jose *Sun*'s editorial page carried seven editorials dealing with transit in 1969 and six in 1970.

The configuration of themes in the *Sun*'s editorials was almost identical to that of the ***Mercury*** with the exception of a greater emphasis on the utility of transit to drivers faced with the crush of highway taxes, insurance costs, congestion, and gas bills—in effect, the arguments that Transit Campaign Chairman Mancini felt received short shrift in the campaign.

In 1969, four *Sun* editorials dealt with the costs of transit, three with the means of paying for the costs; three mentioned air pollution; one mentioned the land-use costs of freeway proliferation; two mentioned mobility for people without other means of transportation.

In 1970, the *Sun* emphasized the economic benefits of transit—getting the unemployed to job markets, and the savings to car owners from transit (three editorial mentions); three editorials discussed transit finance; two discussed the "multiplier effect" on the region's economy; three mentioned air pollution; one mentioned both rising property values and mobility for those now lacking it.

Only once each year did the *Sun* mention the difficulty of adapting either bus or fixed rail transit to a low-density land use configuration. Not once were alternatives to pollution control or population movement mentioned in the context of transit editorials.

Thus, the *Sun* shared in the failure to discuss and rebut the difficult questions of planning and profitability of transit in a low-density urban area. Serious attention, however, was devoted to changing attitudes toward the use of cars and in informing the public on the massive personal and public investment in the upkeep of the present car-oriented transportation system.

In contrast to the skew away from environmental themes in the *Mercury*'s coverage of the airport issue, the *Sun* placed greater emphasis on the airport's environmental impact:

Sun Editorials in 1969 and 1970

	Number of airport editorials in which theme is raised (total N is 12)	Number of transit editorials in which theme is raised (total N is 13)
Noise pollution	9	0
Air pollution	5	6
Land use considerations	5	2
Population growth treated as an environmental hazard	5	0

The *Sun*'s treatment might be considered as a crude base line index of the environmental importance of the two issues. As such it is an indication of the significance of the environmental blackout in the *Mercury*'s airport editorials.

The number of editorials in the two papers on each issue underlines the *Mercury*'s non-coverage of the airport:

Editorials in 1969 and 1970

	Airport	Transit
Mercury	5	52
Sun	12	13

One *Sun* editorial is offered here as an example of excellence. (The content themes coded in the two years of analysis are offered in Appendix VI.)

> TRANSIT PLAN CAN BE A BARGAIN FOR EVERYONE–How would you like a thousand dollar bill tucked in your pocket?
>
> You'll be offered that real possibility at the November election.
>
> Conservatively careful estimates of the savings to the average family budget are considerably in excess of $1000 if at least one member of the family can use public transportation rather than a private car. Sounds hard to believe? But it's true.
>
> The system, obviously is going to have to be of a quality in terms of timing, accessibility, and safety to make you want to ride it. The goal of the county-wide transit district concept proposed for the November election is exactly that.
>
> Typically, even a work car, will cost well over a $1000 to operate per year.
>
> The transit measure on the ballot would be financed by a half-cent sales tax. Since this doesn't apply to food or shelter, the tax would probably be in the vicinity of $30 per year. With a companion measure now in the state legislative hopper, to allow 5% sales tax on gasoline to go toward transit,

the new district would be able to nick each motorist for an additional $12 per year (based on 12,000 miles of driving). With these two sources, as well as the hoped-for federal matching grants, the district could avoid any property tax. The ballot measure specifically eliminates a property tax without coming back to the electorate.

The two largest expenditures government now makes on our behalf are for education and transportation. And economists agree that education and transportation relate directly to the health and growth of any area's economy.

To give you an inkling of what dollars are actually being spent for transportation in this valley right now, take a look at these figures:

$300 million for new and used cars and parts.

$100 million annually for gas and oil.

$70 million in road construction by both local and state agencies this year alone.

When you place against that half-billion dollar figure, the 11 million which would come from the half-cent sales tax to get a public transit system into high gear for the county, you can see that it could be the biggest bargain in transportation ever attained.

There are now 700,000 vehicles registered in Santa Clara county. In a straight line they'd stretch from here to Chicago, bumper to bumper. That image summons up some of the untabulated kinds of costs no one can measure. How much economic loss is sustained every year in accidents, in delays caused by congestion, not to mention the health problems which smog contributes.

First priority of the transit district will be to attack the home-to-work problem so that the most immediate benefits can come back to those paying the freight.

But in the ultimate, the district will bring forth innovative systems of rapid transit coupled with extensive feeder bus service, so that our sprawled-out county can be linked together with fast, efficient, low cost travel options.

The overall benefit to the community can be enormous. And you can accomplish it with the power of your vote in November.

News Coverage of Airport and Transit Planning in San Jose

If newspaper ownership enters the newsroom to manage the flow of information to the public, it would be most likely to occur in controversial news stories which affect the economic prospects of the newspaper as a business enterprise. Both transit and airport policy qualify as issues in which the newspaper has a direct and salient interest. Transportation is the lifeline of an area's economy; the retailer's ads are the lifeblood of the newspaper industry—and the two go hand in hand.

With its fortunes tied to the health of the local marketplace, it is predictable that a metropolitan newspaper would promote public expenditure for transportation. This we found was the case in the editorial policy of the San Jose *Mercury*.

A more delicate question is the impact of the economic interests of the newspaper on its news coverage—an influence that could subvert notions of balance and "objectivity," discourage probing reportage, and violate the newspaper's public trust.

Two efforts were made to gauge the existence or extent of management interference in the news gathering process: content analysis of published news, and interviews with reporters whose bylines were identified during the analysis. (The content analysis method appears in Appendix VI.)

The issues for analysis–coverage of transit and the airport–were chosen on the basis of their parallelism: both involved the economic interest of the newspaper; both involve visible decisions and events in the public sector; both involve a similar elite cast from the private sector. They sharply diverge in their environmental impact: airport expansion involves increasing levels of environmental stress in the form of noise and air pollution and is a stimulus to growth; transit has the opposite effect of substituting low-polluting transportation for the private car while at the same time imposing an ordering effect on urban growth patterns.

A newspaper which assiduously "watchdogs" government performance and seeks to shed light on conflict and controversy would presumably give greater play to the environmental aspects of the airport than to transit, as was the case with the *Sun*'s editorials. A metropolitan paper which serves its own interests, on the other hand, would predictably give little play to the environmental hazards of airport location and size; it might find, further, that transit was a "motherhood issue" on which to go hell-bent environmentalist–without danger of offense.

This parallelism between issues appears remarkably neat. In actuality it is considerably murkier. The transit issue came to a public vote; the airport issue did not. Transit coverage had logical focus and terminal point: election day. The airport issue simmered, came to a boil, and was taken off the burner by city council resolution. Parallel periods of analysis are therefore difficult to identify; the difficulty is compounded by the different decision routes in the two controversies–transit was a county-wide issue; the airport was initiated at the city level.

It is possible, however, to identify the crisis point in the airport location controversy: the four-to-three vote by the San Jose city council to reject the Alviso airport location which would have conflicted with residential uses and the South Bay wildlife refuge. The events of the previous three months indicate that this time was the make or break period for airport plans:

February 11:	County Medical Society opposed airport.
February 18:	News conference of State Assemblyman Earle P. Crandall and Senator Alfred E. Alquist opposed international airport in North Santa Clara County.
February 24:	Neighboring Santa Clara's city council passed a resolution against San Jose's airport plans.
February 25:	San Jose city council ordered the airport manager to stop promoting airport plans prior to a decision.
March 2:	County Parks and Recreation Commission opposed the airport.
March 9:	Regional air traffic study released.
March 10:	Alameda County Supervisors requested San Jose to delay any decision until after regional study.
March 14:	Airport opponents and proponents debated at a heavily-attended (500) League of Women Voters forum.
March 15:	*Mercury* released a two-month-old poll showing voters favored the "superport."
March 18:	State Senator Clark Bradley opposed the airport.
March 20:	Airport subcommittee of the county Planning Policy Committee concluded the fact-finding stage of its airport location study.

April 7:	Airline Pilots Association petitioned San Jose City Council.
April 21:	San Jose Airport Commission backed off the mudflat site and urged study of other locations.
April 24:	*Mercury* editorially urged retreat from international airport.
April 27:	San Jose City Council killed the mudflat airport site.
April 29:	Airport subcommittee of the Planning Policy Committee resolved against both the mudflat site and a second north county international airport site.

The focus of citizen group and official activity in the March-April period allows the researcher to impute some similarity to the month before the transit elections.

As a check on discontinuity between issues, both the *Mercury* and *Sun* were examined during the same period for both issues.

And, as a final methodological caveat, it should be noted that inter-coder reliability was .91 and .89 for the airport and transit respectively.

A short summary of findings and conclusions is offered to guide the reader through the maze of data which follows.

There was a higher incidence of environmental themes in two months of the *Mercury*'s transit coverage than in two months of airport news. In the *Sun*, the environmental hazards of the airport received more frequent attention.

Interviews with bylined *Mercury* reporters indicated that there was no effort to manage the news by establishing a policy line or blue-penciling copy. Reporters were emphatic in stating that their professional judgment of newsworthiness was the sole criterion of the coverage of stories on their beats.

Both the airport and transit were extremely complex issues. They involved a diffuse array of government hierarchies, citizen groups, and influentials from the private sector. They also demanded a sophisticated understanding of environmental affairs: the interaction of air pollution, noise pollution, land use, and urban growth patterns. In both issues, questions of engineering and hardware are also defyingly complex.

The complexity of the issues and the diffusion and profusion of both events and sources logically demanded that the newsroom be reorganized to cover the stories on a continuing basis. Only continuity in the background and expertise of the reporter would have allowed an intelligible report of the two controversies. In the case of transit, *Mercury* reporter Jim Choate was freed to develop a five-part interpretive series and to travel with county planners as they surveyed transit operations in other cities. Choate became an expert and aficionado on the history and hardware of public transit, both bus and rail.

In the case of the airport, the natural entropy of the newsroom was not corrected. Instead, the story bounced from beat to beat, suffering from a fragmented event-centered reportorial effort which was not equipped to place the issue in perspective or to alert citizens to its increasing momentum in the decision process.

Thus, where the environmental aspects of transit offered a salespoint which coincided with a management-favored policy, reportorial assignment and interpretive freedom insured extensive coverage. Where management's policy line was in the process of change—from favoring the economics of the mudflat airport site to recognizing its political infeasibility—the failure to reorganize the newsroom and correct its tendency to entropy resulted in a low-profile for the environmental hazards of the airport site.

A more detailed profile of news coverage follows.

During the two-month period of March and April 1970, the *Mercury* ran 11 stories dealing with "expansion," "siting," or "location" of airport facilities in San Jose. Three more stories dealt with taxicab service to the airport and a general aviation airport in the foothills. The stories totalled 71 column inches. For sake of comparison with the differently formatted *Sun*, a paragraph measure is also used. There were 71 paragraphs of airport news in the *Mercury* (journalistic style allows a reasonable comparison between numbers of paragraphs). During the same period, the weekly *Sun* ran 11 stories on the airport issue with a total of 125 paragraphs. The median number of paragraphs in the *Mercury* was four; ten in the *Sun*. Seventy-three percent or eight of the 11 *Sun* stories ran on page one. The majority of *Mercury* stories were displayed on the local news page. The *Sun* appears to have given better "play" to the airport issue in terms of length and display.

Neither paper offered interpretative or investigative news on the airport during the two-month period: all news was event-centered. During this period the *Sun* covered the meetings of five public bodies dealing with the airport issue, the *Mercury* three. The *Mercury* covered statements by four public officials (two from their Sacramento bureau); the *Sun* two. In February, however, the *Sun* offered a lengthy depth piece on the problems of noise pollution–its health impact, regulation and control, and means of noise suppression.

Out of the 11 stories offered in each paper, the following distribution of environmental themes was found:

	Number of *Mercury* stories raising environmental issues	Number of *Sun* stories raising environmental issues
Noise pollution	3	4
Air pollution	2	2
Land use questions	1	5
Population growth treated as an environmental hazard	1	2

Differences in the frequency of environmental content between the *Mercury* and *Sun* are perceptible, but both papers offered the reader some appreciation of the generic environmental hazards involved in airport development. The *Sun*'s coverage offered considerably greater detail: for example, two stories dealt with the effect of airports as a population magnet and four with the incompatibility between the airport and the use of baylands for parks, recreation, and wildlife preservation. The *Mercury* raised these issues in only one story on page 77; coverage of the same event–the League of Women Voters forum attended by over 500 persons–received page one play in the *Sun*.

The economics of the airport issue were raised in one *Sun* story–the coverage of the same League forum. They were raised once in the *Mercury* as well with the same news peg.

Distinctions between the *Mercury* and *Sun* coverage are greatest for news content which indicated that the newspaper was playing a watchdog role with relation to the performance of local government. There was a frequency of adversarity in the *Sun*'s coverage:

	Number of stories in which theme appears in *Mercury*	Number of stories in which theme appeared in *Sun*
Adverse effect on wildlife	1	5
Adverse effect on natural, scenic and recreational assets	1	5
Adverse effect upon water and air quality	2	2

A similar measure sought to determine whether the newspaper's coverage discussed policy alternatives or gave play to proposals which countered the "accepted wisdom." In this area, too, the *Sun* offered more extensive coverage:

	Number of *Mercury* stories in which theme appeared in *Mercury*	Number of *Sun* stories in which theme appeared in *Sun*
Ground transit to existing airports	0	1
Location of airport on the urban periphery away from population concentrations	0	2
Ground transit as a substitute for intrastate air service	1	2

The differences in coverage between the papers are more exaggerated by the facts that the *Sun* is published only weekly, that its staff size is minimal compared to the *Mercury*'s and that its news hole for *each* edition is about one-tenth of the *Mercury*'s.

Staff and news hole differences would have no significance if the *Mercury* had covered all of the available public events in the two-month period. It did not. Without substituting an outside judgment of news value for that of the *Mercury* editors, it can be noted that:

1. The Airport Commission letter urging the San Jose City Council to scrap the mudflat site was not covered,
2. Some six meetings of the Planning Policy Committee Subcommittee on Airport Siting were not covered,
3. The Alameda County Supervisors resolution urging regional responsibility was not covered.

Perhaps most interesting, the *Mercury* published an opinion poll indicating public support for the mudflat jetport on the day following the League of Women Voters meeting at which airport proponents had received a drubbing from the heavily environmentalist audience. The poll ran 12½ inches on page 35, compared to 39 inches on page 77 for the LWV forum. The poll, conducted for the *Mercury* by the Diridon Research Corporation, was over two months old, although this was not reported in the *Mercury* story.

In iterviews with three *Mercury* reporters whose bylines had appeared on airport stories, there was unanimous agreement that there was no "airport line" which guided the stories they filed. Each reporter insisted he had absolute freedom on his beat to report the news as he saw it.

All of the reporters agreed that their news judgment was likely to be questioned only on initiative stories–and then that the story was likely to run. As one of the reporters put it: "The day of the blackout and arm-twisting is long past." He attributed the failings of *Mercury* coverage to the inertia of a large newsroom, noting that stories got good coverage when they fell on stable beats, but got short shrift when a general assignment reporter had to be specifically assigned to irregular events. Much of environment news, he added, falls in the general assignment category where reporters without special expertise or background on the issue must "muddle through."

The *Mercury* never assigned a reporter to follow through on the airport issue as the story glanced off and among six beats: environment, county, Sacramento, city hall, general assignment, and aviation. A reporter from the Fremont *Argus* noted that the *Mercury* turned down an offer from a bylined reporter to take the story on as a unified whole. The *Argus* reporter added that "the word went around to other editors that the *Mercury* wanted the airport issue kept cool." The *Argus,* with Fremont located in the jet noise pattern, he said, did no such thing.

The failure to assign a reporter to cover the complex and controversial airport plan is placed in greater relief by the *Mercury*'s transit coverage where county beat reporter Choate was freed to travel with planners to examine transit systems in operation and to write a highly favorable five-part series on the virtues of public transit. "County officials pressured the *Mercury* to have me do the series," he said, "but I was planning to anyway." The series, he said, was his own: "I couldn't care less what the edit page says. On this paper, a reporter has total freedom to do what he wants to do." The series, he added, was "slanted. I personally favor transit and I felt a duty to slant in favor of anything that could get rid of smog. It was a motherhood issue."

The *Mercury*'s extensive transit coverage reflected Choate's enthusiasm. In only three of 40 stories in 1970 were transit opponents quoted or paraphrased.

In the 1969 transit measure election, the *Mercury* ran 33 stories with a total of 409 paragraphs and a median of 14 paragraphs per story. The *Sun* in the same month before the transit election ran four stories for a total of 54 paragraphs and a nine-graph median. The number of stories is a proportional reflection of the differences in size of the papers' news holes.

In the 1970 election, the *Mercury*'s 40 stories ran 345 total paragraphs and displayed a 7-graph median. The *Sun* ran ten stories for a total paragraph count of 69 and a 10-graph median.

When the volume of airport and transit news in the *Mercury* and *Sun* for two months of airport news and the month of 1970 transit election coverage are compared, the results are:

	Mercury	*Sun*
Transit	345 paragraphs, 7 graph median	69 paragraphs, 10 graph median
Airport	71 paragraphs, 4 graph median	125 paragraphs, 10 graph median

Of the *Mercury*'s coverage of transit in 1970, only 14½ inches were devoted to the coverage of a single public meeting. Fourteen stories were devoted to the statements or actions of private groups–primarily pro-transit endorsements. Eight stories carried no event peg and represented interpretation or analysis initiated by the paper.

The *Mercury*, clearly, organized its newsroom to pursue the transit issue. The frequency of environmental themes is a clear indication:

	1969	1970
Air Pollution	5	11
Noise Pollution	2	0
Land Use	1	0

The only more frequent theme in the *Mercury*'s 1970 coverage was the means of paying for transit which appeared in 25 stories.

The *Sun*'s coverage displayed a similar increase in the mention of the air pollution theme from 1969 to 1970:

	1969	1970
Air Pollution	1	4
Noise Pollution	0	0
Land Use	0	0

Transit finance was mentioned four times in the *Sun*'s 1970 transit election coverage.

The watchdog role played by the *Sun* in the airport issue was discarded for transit; nor did the paper seek to publicize alternatives. *(See Appendix VI.)*

The *Mercury*, despite the publication of eight interpretive or initiative stories, displayed a similar pattern of neglect for the watchdog function. No adversary themes or alternative policy options appeared in 1969. In the 1970 period of analysis the *Mercury* carried one story which noted the financial troubles of transit in other cities and quoted, only to dismiss with a kicker, the opponents' charge that transit carried hidden tax costs. The kicker read: "Opposition Attacks Side Issues." Only after the 1970 elections did a *Mercury* news story concede that a very real problem is getting people to use a transit system.

The transit-airport comparison is most invidious for the *Sun* which printed policy options and adversary themes so regularly in covering the airport issue.

The comparison of the frequency of environmental themes in news published by the *Mercury* on the airport issue (two months of coverage) and transit (also two months, one each 1969 and 1970 elections) is revealing:

	Airport	Transit
Air Pollution	2	16
Noise Pollution	3	2
Land Use	1	1

The failure to deeply consider the difficulties of adapting transit to a scattered and sprawling low-density land-use configuration must be taken as another example of neglect of the watchdog function. Both the *Mercury* and the *Sun* shared in this failing. The *Mercury* must be faulted more because of overtly pro-transit stance of the initiative series by Choate–a lost opportunity to discuss the problems, challenges and possibilities of transit.

The data argue that the *Mercury* gave greatest coverage to the environmental impact of public investment in transportation where such news would perform a salesmanship role for improved transportation services. When such coverage diverged from the motherhood issue of clean air to threaten policy—as was the case with the airport and the land use implications of transit—coverage was notably sparser.

The beat orientation of the metropolitan newspaper, which dulls the ability to give adequate coverage of complex subjects with outcroppings at many levels of government, was not remedied in the case of airport coverage: no uniform mechanism for coverage was developed; reporters were not encouraged to develop interpretive or initiative stories.

The *Mercury* must be faulted for corporate inertia in failing to react to a critical environmental story. In comparison with the promotional and aggressive coverage of the transit election—and the coverage of downtown convention and sports facilities, regional air pollution problems and the proposed location of a Swift & Company slaughter house in San Jose—corporate inertia proved greatest in the airport issue where the economic interests of the paper conflicted with aggressive environmental news coverage.

In summary, the interview and content analysis data indicate that the *Mercury*'s coverage of the environmental impact of public transit service was promotional rather than probing. In the airport issue, where promotional coverage of environmental impact was impossible, the *Mercury*'s coverage of environmental themes was noticeably sparser. Both the airport and transit controversies involved multiple layers of government and diverse spheres of authority. Both involved complex questions of urban growth, land use impact, and "multiplier effects" on the size and density of the urban area. Neither could be adequately covered without a management commitment to freeing reportorial time for study, analysis, and diverse spheres of authority.

Reportorial time and effort were organized to cover the transit issue; the airport issue bounced between beats.

The *Mercury*'s failure to place the airport issue on the environment beat—rather than any overt direction of reporters—had the effect of dulling news that would conflict with management's hope for a regional jetport—with its attendant bonuses for attracting corporate headquarters, luring industry, accommodating cosmopolites, boosting growth, and allowing high rise development in downtown San Jose to soar above the height limits imposed by the flight path of incoming jets at the present airport. As *Mercury* Business Manager Ridder told the San Jose Goals Committee: "To have a strong downtown, we will have to eliminate jets flying over it."

And, as has been discussed, the *Mercury* is economically, politically and psychologically committed to a strong and cosmopolitan downtown.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The metropolitan newspaper's commitment to the health and vitality of the local economy is an appropriate stance. Without a healthy economy, public and private expenditure for environmental improvement, much less housing and welfare, are crippled. The most common and accepted wisdom, however, has held that a healthy economy is synonymous with a rapid growth economy. Newspapers have been slow to discard the boom and booster ethic which equated growth with progress and the attraction of industrial tax base with an improved level of urban amenity. The environmental movement, however, has begun to underline the massive diseconomies–regional in scope–which are represented by the failure to include air, noise, and water pollution and the biotic and aesthetic damage attendant to sprawl in the cost-benefit calculus of urban growth.

In this context, competition for growth is a questionable antidote to inequity in tax base and the inadequacy of dollars for pollution control, parks, police, education and the myriad of welfare services provided by local government. Urban competition for tax base has aggravated, rather than solved these problems, by increasing the number of external diseconomies related to transportation, congestion, waste, sprawl, pollution, and scale.

What can be done? A few proposals for newspaper management, reporters and citizen environmentalists are appropriate here.

Newspaper Management–Management must place its focus on downtown in perspective. It must recognize the newspaper's economic interest in the appropriate regional perspective, recognizing that regional planning rather than municipal growth competition offers the best possibility of internalizing what economists refer to as "external diseconomies." With regional planning, urban specialization within regional diversity can replace municipal competition. In short, growth and development can be planned and distributed rationally and regionally–while increasing the publisher's net gains *after taxes.*

In the process, the publisher will be trading political influence for economic benefit–and the environmental benefits which accrue to planning.

The Reporter–The reporter can more forcefully urge, perhaps through the American Newspaper Guild, that the clumsy mechanisms of assignment be rationalized to unify coverage according to issue as well as beat.

The reporter can discard the attitude that he "doesn't know what management is thinking." He should know. He should trust to his professionalism to prevent being influenced by the management line. Then, by knowing management's goals, the reporter's professionalism can play the role of countervailing force to assure that coverage is not distorted by corporate inertia or economic self-interest.

The reporter can initiate stories before they reach the public agenda–insuring that private and self-interested parties must contest with public opinion and glaring publicity in influencing the public policy of the mixed economy.

Citizen Environmentalists–Environmentalists can unlock the information monopoly of the metropolitan daily and create a climate of competition by aggressively pursuing the possibilities of Cable Television and photo-offset house publications.

Citizens might explore means of establishing person-to-person feedback to newspaper management on questions of news quality and local coverage. Both citizens and newspaper management could benefit from the broadening of perspective and reference groups.

These suggestions are hardly radical; nor are they more than the bare-bones of an agenda for reachable change. Perhaps their virtue is that they demand very little of man's generosity and expect even less of his goodness.

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31. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

32. *Ibid.*, p 182.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

37. Quoted in *San Francisco Magazine*, "Joe Ridder's San Jose."

38. William L. Rivers and David M. Rubin, *A Region's Press,* Institute of Governmental Studies, Berkeley, 1971, p. 51.

39. Interview, July, 1971.

40. Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press,* University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1956, p. 74.

41. Otis Chandler, "A Publisher's View of Credibility," in Richard W. Lee (ed.), *Politics & The Press,* Acropolis Books, Washington, D.C., 1970, p. 85.

42. William L. Rivers, *The Adversaries,* Beacon Press, Boston, 1970.

43. Quoted by Norton Long in "The Corporation, Its Satellites and the Local Community," in Edward S. Mason (Ed.), *The Corporation in Modern Society,* Athaneum, New York, 1970, p. 215.

44. Dr. Thomas Harvey in testimony before the Airport Subcommittee of the Planning Policy Committee of the Santa Clara County Inter-City Council, 1970.

45. The Federal Airport Development and Revenue Act of 1970, Public Law 91-258, site: 84 STAT. 227. ff.

46. Interview with Santa Clara County Associate Planner, Henry Johnson, 1971.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Op. cit.*, Graves, p. 4.

49. Testimony of Federal Aviation Agency representative Frank Happy before the Airport Subcommittee of the Santa Clara County Planning Policy Committee.

50. Jewel Bellush and Maurray Hausknecht, *Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning,* Doubleday Anchor, Garden City, New York, 1967, p. 221.

Chapter Eight

GETTING ALONG WITHOUT THE NEWS MEDIA

This chapter has been handled a little differently from the material that has gone before. It is the report of a study made by a Stanford University graduate student in Communication to discover if she could find out for herself the environmental information which the media have difficulty explaining adequately—in this case, the California Water Plan.

Playing the parts of four interested young housewives, she investigated all possible sources of information, and learned a great deal. This is her story.

At the Beginning of My Study Two Months Ago, What I Thought the Problem Was

It is sometimes difficult to decide (I wrote) whether or not the mass media are doing their best to cover a particular issue. Perhaps the issue is really too complex to be adequately discussed: perhaps any rendering into terms a mass readership could understand would be a gross oversimplification. But in the case of the California Water Plan, an issue that affects millions of people, many newspaper editors have admitted that their papers have not done an adequate job of providing coverage of the Plan. If that is the case, the burden of responsibility for finding out about the California Water Plan becomes that of the man who is interested in the Plan. This Interested Citizen, granted, must have extraordinary initiative and motivation. For the vast majority of people, if it isn't in the morning paper or on the evening news, it just doesn't exist.

In my study, I shall first try to find out how many people have felt the need for additional information about the California Water Plan. Second, I shall attempt to duplicate those things they might do to obtain information, so that I can assess the cost of their quest in terms of measurable variables like time and money.

My Reasons for Doing the Study

Obviously not everyone has the time or money or even the inclination to find out for himself what the media have neglected to tell him. If everyman has to be his own reporter, then only the leisured, moneyed and educated will be informed. These few people will have a monopoly on information about vital issues. And information, of course, is one means of power: if someone doesn't know about something, he can't protest, approve, or even talk about it. Not that the media are conspiring against their readers who do not have the means to find out for themselves what the news is: this would be a grossly unfair charge. However, by often inadequate coverage of the California Water Plan, the media have contributed toward a situation of informational haves and have nots; toward the dividing of the population of California into two groups, the informed and the uninformed/misinformed. The remedy for this situation—newspapers providing in-depth, comprehensive coverage of the Plan, and broadcasters explaining new developments as fully as possible, given their time limitations—would remove the aura of mystery and inscrutability that the California Water Plan now has. People would then be able to suggest means of dealing with an issue that so vitally affects them.

The Study Plan

As mentioned, the study really consists of two parts–measuring indications of citizen interest and duplication of the efforts of Interested Citizen to obtain information. That is, I shall be writing to conservation groups both to ask for information *and* to ask how many people write to them asking for information. Others I shall be writing in this dual procedure will be the Department of Water Resources, members of the California Congressional delegation in Washington, and state legislators. Other measures of citizen interest planned are asking newspaper editorial page editors how many letters they receive discussing the Plan, and reviewing literature about the Plan in the San Francisco Public Library to see how many times and how often it is checked out, and general physical indications of wear.

Besides writing letters to duplicate Interested Citizen's quest for information, I shall both telephone and visit in person the major source of official California Water Plan information, the Department of Water Resources. In both cases I shall measure how long the official will talk with me and what kind of information he gives. A corresponding measure of response in the letter writing would be how long it takes an official to answer a request for information.

In all cases, I shall chart the flow of information: how many times is Interested Citizen rerouted and shuffled to another official before he obtains the information he needs? This will measure, or at least indicate, any obstructions in the information flow, as well as how tenacious Interested Citizen has to be to finally reach his goal of obtaining extensive information.

This is all, of course, a pretty general "plan of attack." The only real methodological must is remembering to use different names for each of the four phases of the study. But the rest, especially the telephoning and the personal visit, will be more a matter of doing, seeing what happens, remembering what happens, and writing it up. To plan any structuring of these experiences beforehand might eliminate possibilities now unknown to me.

What I Had Expected to Find

I expect to find that these means of obtaining information are not ideal ones. This process is time-consuming, it costs a lot of money, and it may not even be productive. It obviously isn't as easy as getting the same information from the mass media. If the media fail to extensively cover the California Water Plan, it can cause a lot of trouble for Interested Citizen.

* * *

DOING JUST FINE WITHOUT THE MEDIA

What Really Happened: A Report Two Months Later

Well . . . one begins to suspect that one's hypothesis is disintegrating when everyone sends prompt responses to requests for information and officials are noticeably eager to talk. Obtaining the needed information was just too embarrassingly easy. The situation was not as critical as I had supposed; but, as I shall discuss later, there is a minor problem with my extensive, recently acquired, library of California Water Plan literature. While my hypothesis was experiencing this shattering identity crisis, I was troubled with the lesser worry of remembering "What name am I going by now?" Like when someone at the Sierra Club asked me how to spell "Lancaster," my present pseudonym, and I had to pause to think for a period of time that would have made *me* suspicious.

The California Water Plan, it seems, is also having name problems. An information officer of the Department of Water Resources called me at home one morning and spent a good portion of our 45-minute chat explaining the difference between the California Water Plan and the State Water Project. My colleagues and I would probably be contributing to the confusion between the two terms, if we persisted in calling what the DWR considers to be the State Water Project, by the more general term, the California Water Plan. The "California Water Plan" is an emotion-charged phrase; the State Water Project is a term which is certainly less familiar to Californians. The California Water Plan, which has provoked so much abuse, this DWR spokesman implied, is really above reproach, since it is not "a construction blueprint but a conceptual framework." The California Water Plan encompasses the California State Water Project, the federal Central Valley Project and flood control works, and smaller, local projects. According to Department of Water Resources Bulletin No. 160-70, Section 10005 of the California Water Code "establishes the California Water Plan as a flexible pattern for the development of the State's water resources–not as a restrictive or all-inclusive plan, but one into which new ideas and new technologies may be incorporated as changing conditions dictate." The State Water Project, on the other hand, is a construction blueprint in which transporting water from Nothern California to Southern California is the most controversial section. One side questions the need for doing this and points out possible consequences, while the other side stresses the urgency of completing construction as soon as possible.

DWR's insistence upon calling the Project by its correct name may be more than a semantic quibble. The two DWR information officers that I talked with both said that the newspapers often confuse the terms "on purpose." But since the term "California Water Plan" seems to be the one most frequently used, its continued appearance is self-perpetuating: that is, reader identification of "California Water Plan" will continue to be higher than that of "State Water Project." Even though "California Water Plan" is imprecise terminology, the media almost are forced to use it, if readers are to have any idea what they are talking about. The future of the "California Water Plan" is jeopardized, however, when it is consistently used in conjunction with the less popular, controversial "State Water Project," only a portion, albeit a significant one, of the entire Plan. Therefore, to be fair to the California Water Plan, one must use "State Water Project" in the more restricted sense.

Measures of Citizen Interest

Citizen interest in the State Water Project is relatively high. Though a sample of editors of newspaper editorial pages responded that only a tiny fraction of their readership is motivated to write a letter to the editor on the State Water Project, in the first five months of 1971, the DWR had already received 21,000 requests for information, and conservation groups had received several hundred inquiries. The State Water Resources Control Board, a quasi-judicial body with its own Information Office separate from that of the DWR, reported a "very rough" estimate of less than one request per day.

However, the few state and national legislators who were sent questionnaires, with the exception of Congressman Jerome Waldie, recorded a small number of requests for information. Though it is interesting to note that a state senator who recorded about 10-15 requests this year sent Mrs. H. R. Lancaster (one of my aliases) a *printed* position paper on the Peripheral Canal, a part of the State Water Project, with this introduction: "In recent months the California State Water Project and the proposed Peripheral Canal have come under attack from various groups and organizations. I have thus prepared a brief sketch that deals with the background, the physical aspects, and the controversy over the proposed Peripheral Canal."

Only one legislator, a state assemblyman, acknowledged receiving no requests for information about the California Water Plan, but this assertion is somewhat suspect since I had sent him a request for CWP information, using an alias, the same day I sent him the questionnaire. Congressman Waldie, a leading spokesman for the opposition to the State Water Project, estimated receiving 400 requests for information since the beginning of the year. Between 30,000 and 35,000 people have now responded to Alvin Duskin's newspaper ad on the California Water Plan, asking for more information. Alvin Duskin is a San Francisco dress manufacturer and ecology-minded private citizen who placed full-page ads in major California newspapers condemning the Plan.

The Quest for Information: Writing and Reading

Despite expectations that I would encounter great difficulty in obtaining information about the State Water Project, on the whole I found DWR officials, legislators, and conservation groups to be extremely helpful. Though I spent two months on my study, much of this was preparation time rather than active information-seeking. I would estimate that someone could become fairly well-informed about the Project in a two- or three-week time span. Writing letters requesting information might even be a spontaneous action: one is rewarded almost immediately with innumerable pamphlets, brochures, newsletters, etc. Most of this information took from one day to less than two weeks to arrive.

Responses ranged from conservation group newsletters to politicians' position papers to referrals to other sources. The Sierra Club, for example, sent a report of their Water Resources Subcommittee of the Northern California Regional Conservation Committee on the Peripheral Canal. This report was a detailed examination of the Canal. Since the Sierra Club had conditionally endorsed construction of the Peripheral Canal more than a year ago, their paper examined the conditions under which a Peripheral Canal would be advisable and asked for more study before the making of a final decision.

Friends of the Earth sent "What If We Don't Do It? No. 2: The California Water Plan," and Friends of the Earth Bulletin No. 1: "California Water Plan Task Force Information." They also included some more general ecological information bulletins. All of these were written in a very readable, occasionally highly emotional, style; they strongly opposed the California Water Plan-State Water Project.

The California Committee of Two Million is also dedicated to preserving our natural environment. They sent a current newsletter and a copy of the *Wild Rivers Reporter*. Both of these report the efforts of the Committee of Two Million and other groups and individuals to save the rivers of California. The style may be characterized as hard-hitting rhetoric, much like that of the Friends of the Earth publications.

State and national legislators responded to my requests for information about the California Water Plan in several ways. In what may be a negative response, neither California United States senator responded at all in the space of a month. Charles Gubser, representing California's 10th District in Washington, D.C., wrote, "I regret that I do not have material available to send you relative to the California Water Plan. However, I am pleased to recommend several sources to which you might go directly"; these sources were the DWR, the Sierra Club, the California Water Resources Association, and the Santa Clara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. His letter would be helpful to one seeking in-depth information about the California Water Plan since the last two sources cited are by no means routine ones. And Representative Gubser mentions that Donald Currlin, manager-counsel for the Santa Clara Flood Control and Water Conservation District, "has conducted an in-depth study on the effects of the California Water Plan on our immediate area."

Congressman Waldie sent several of his press releases and a publication, "Must Destructive Degradation Come to the Waters of the Delta and San Francisco Bay?" distributed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. All of these are, predictably enough, decidedly anti-Peripheral Canal. On the other hand, Clark L. Bradley, a California state senator, sent a six-page position paper tracing the background, physical aspects, purposes, and controversy over the Peripheral Canal. In conclusion, Senator Bradley supports the Canal provided certain safeguards of water quality are written into the legislation.

State Assemblyman Richard Hayden sent two DWR bulletins generally not available to the public free of charge and a third bulletin, "The California State Water Project Summary: 1969." He also commented on the difference between the California Water Plan and the State Water Project (I had asked for information on the California Water Plan): "The California Water Plan and the State Water Project are sometimes confused. Basically, the California Water Plan provides a basic framework in which all water development must fit. This includes federal development as well as development by the State of California and local agencies. The State Water Project is only one element of the larger water plan."

The DWR sent me about 20 items in a kit on the California Water Plan, including a huge wall map of California water resources development. The style of the written material ranged from the corny

> . . . The State Water Project provides water to sustain life.
>
> . . . The State Water Project helps produce food to feed our families and fiber to clothe them.
>
> . . . The State Water Project generates power to light our homes and schools and run the television, and it does so without polluting the air or the water.
>
> . . . The State Water Project gives us new lakes where the youngsters can swim, father can fish, and mother can relax in the shade of a tree.
>
> . . . The State Water Project protects life and property from winter floods.
>
> . . . The State Water Project stores excess water for use in the dry summer–to keep beauty and fish in mountain streams; to swell the flows of rivers; and to serve man at home, on the farm, and in the factory

to the slick (a leaflet on the Peripheral Canal printed on light blue paper with little fish symbols to mark important points). Most of the writing, however, is simple and direct, probably due to the fact that schoolchildren and teachers are the primary groups writing the DWR for information.

Lots of Information and Inherent Problems

Obviously, information about the State Water Project is easily accessible. But being bombarded by bulletins, pamphlets, maps, press releases, etc., does not necessarily contribute to understanding the State Water Project or deciding what to do, if anything, about it. At the letter-writing stage, one finds that much of this information is contradictory; for example, the Peripheral Canal, according to DWR information, is urgently needed to enhance the state's fish and wildlife, whereas conservation organizations call it a plan for ecological disaster.

Though one obtains reams of printed material through this information-gathering process, most of it is one-sided. The recipient must either make his own synthesis of the opposing claims and countercharges, or else accept one viewpoint, perhaps because of some predisposition to do so. For various reasons, I tend to favor the explanations offered by the conservationists and thus met the profferings of the DWR with great skepticism, if not outright derision. But it was easy for me to see how someone with different ideological convictions could be readily swayed by the DWR's eloquent prose. Were I a DWR fan, I'm sure the logic of the conservation rhetoric would be just as appealing.

The media could provide a valuable service for their audiences by presenting analytical, interpretative accounts about controversies like the State Water Project. Some California papers have already run series on the State Water Project: for example, 62 hours of research went into an extensive five-part series printed last year in the San Jose *Mercury,* and the paper is now planning a more exhaustive team-effort for another series to assess the economic, land-use, environmental and political effects that completion of the project could have on the state. *West* magazine of the Sunday Los Angeles *Times* ran an extremely readable, seven-page article in July, 1970, which was excellent despite its concentration on the colorful figures involved in the State Water Project controversy. Three San Francisco television stations have produced, or are in the process of producing, documentaries on the subject. These efforts are commendable, but it seems that people feel the need for even more information, if one considers the large response to Alvin Duskin's ad and the requests sent to DWR.

Role-playing in Sacramento

On a personal visit to the DWR, I found their Information Officers eager to answer questions. Playing the role of Naive, but Interested, Citizen, I asked the receptionist for information about the California Water Plan. She immediately corrected me, saying that I probably wanted information about the *State Water Project,* and there was some relevant literature on the shelves by the door. From the enormous selection, I picked a few of the most interesting-looking and sat down to read them, hoping to overhear some revealing things about the DWR Information Office. After about 30 minutes of reading how wonderful the State Water Project is and hearing absolutely nothing noteworthy, I asked the secretary where I could find a definition of the difference between the State Water Project and the California Water Plan, as nothing I had seen compared them. She suggested DWR Bulletin No. 3, available in main public libraries and most universities. I asked if instead I could talk with someone about it, and, almost without hesitating, she called one of the Information Officers.

He agreed to talk with me, and I was ushered into a two-man office and introduced as "wanting to find out more about the difference between the California Water Plan and the State Water Project."

"I'm Marie Carpenter," I said, surprisingly enough not stumbling over the new sounds of yet another new name.

"Marie?" he repeated, smiling. Nodding, I began to be dubious about the success of my disguise as an average housewife in Sacramento to attend a convention with her husband. I had foreseen problems like the necessity of keeping my $1.98, purchased-for-the-occasion, wedding band away from direct light in order to diminish the glare. My rationale in posing as a housewife was that few groups of citizens have the leisure time to spend annoying officials with questions–housewives, students, and the unemployed. And a housewife, I thought, is more representative of the average citizen. I kept hoping that my performance was more convincing than my appearance.

We talked for 45 minutes. Though there was a spare chair in the office, I was not asked to sit down, an obvious psychological maneuver that was immediately apparent. My questions gradually progressed from the simple-minded to criticism of the State Water Project. At one point, the other Information Officer joined in our discussion, interrupting his perusal of newspaper clippings on water projects to do so. Both tried to joke their way out of any serious confrontation, keeping our talk on an amiable, pleasant level. I was generously supplied with recent bulletins that were not on the shelves outside. For example, after asking about the possibility of desalting to meet future water needs, I was given press releases and a 56-page bulletin on the subject. From our discussion I learned nothing new, but I was given literature not routinely available to the general public.

A Telephone Call to Sacramento

Another facet of my information-gathering process was a phone call to the DWR. Instead of asking general questions as in the personal visit, I asked quite specific questions, concentrating on the Peripheral Canal. I called the DWR and was immediately transferred to their Public Information Office. A secretary tried to answer my questions, but after two minutes transferred my call to an Information Officer, Richard Wilford. Our 29-minute talk covered a great range of information which was complete and comprehensive. Mr. Wilford, upon being asked, even gave me the names of groups opposing the Peripheral Canal and their reasons for doing so! We talked about the status of construction of the Peripheral Canal, the route of the Federal Bureau of Reclamation feasibility report, as well as the supporters and opponents of the Canal. Mr. Wilford said that the Peripheral Canal is not really necessary to the State Water Project from an engineering standpoint, that water could be transported south without it. All in all, I was surprised by the kind of information I was given. Though I did seek information about both sides, the position of the "opposition" was given dispassionately. My talk with Mr. Wilford certainly made the controversial Peripheral Canal seem to be less emotion-ridden. Since information officers (a euphemism for PR men) often do not perform quite so admirably, this one was a boon for Interested Citizen. Above all, the phone call made clear that an expression of opinion about the Peripheral Canal by a private citizen might be an effective means of action. That is, the Peripheral Canal is still being considered on state and national levels. Letters to congressmen have a good chance of affecting the final outcome, since a good many California representatives are already opposed to construction of the Peripheral Canal.

Other Means of Obtaining Information

There is an even more informal means of obtaining information about a controversial issue; that is, being recipient of articles and clippings from people who were aware of my interest in the State Water

Project. This is especially important as much of State Water Project information is not catalogued: it is sometimes in publications with quite limited circulations and specialized audiences. For example, I was given a copy of the first issue (April, 1971) of *Clear Creek,* an ecology "underground" paper, which included an article critical of the State Water Project. My father sent me a similar article which appeared in the May, 1971, *Sports Afield* in their "Witness to Outrage" series ("a monthly inquiry into the criminal ruin of our woods, water and air by men without foresight or conscience. We hope that the facts presented here will alert you to the terrible and irreversible damage that is being done to your contry . . . now.") The *Sports Afield* article was titled "Digging a Ditch to Disaster." Both of these articles were of the exposé genre and presented quite different analyses of the State Water Project than were available through other channels.

The San Francisco Public Library

Visiting the public library proved to be the least successful means of obtaining information. At the main branch of the San Francisco Public Library, the catalogued State Water Project information appeared to be all DWR bulletins. Another problem is that these are only available on a closed stack, room-use basis. These materials, perhaps because of these restrictions, appeared to be practically unused. Since it is much easier to write or phone for information oneself, this may be the route most people are taking to gaining information.

The Cost of Becoming Informed

As mentioned, I estimate that one could become adequately informed about the State Water Project with a few weeks of study. Of course, two months of perusing State Water Project material in one's spare time might be a more realistic estimate. A two-week concentrated effort would probably produce spectacular results, but few people have the time to devote to such activity.

I spent about $5.00 on stamps and stationery, about $8.00 on telephone calls, and about $10.00 on transportation from Palo Alto to Sacramento. However, this estimate does not include the cost of sending information to me. For example, I received two DWR publications costing $5.00 each from a state assemblyman; these cost 83 cents in postage to mail. Though I can readily calculate the time and money I spent on becoming informed, it would be impossible to figure secretaries' time, costs of publications, postage (some of these were sent by franked mail, of course), etc. Even if $23.00 is not considered excessive by some, certainly others might not be able to afford the luxury of informing themselves about the State Water Project because of the time and money involved. An informational void about the State Water Project can be filled only by the efforts of the mass media.

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSION

Since mid-1969 the Nation's news media have responded with considerable skill and effort to reporting the broad outlines of environmental deterioration in the United States. While news executives themselves are inclined to attribute the increased coverage to public pressure for more information (and to downplay their own role as catalyst) it is likely the two have fed each other; and they have been encouraged by the news value of statements from a few crusader-scientists, and a number of ecological disasters which have captured public concern.

As a result, the amount of environmental news carried by Bay Area news media has increased four to six-fold since 1965, and environmental stories have gradually crept to the front pages of newspapers and into the hourly headlines of news broadcasts. There is much evidence that "the environment" has become established as a regular news beat, and where it is not yet a true beat, it is at least recognized as an area for continuous surveillance by a news executive.

In the Bay Area an encouraging number of news outlets (particularly the metropolitan newspapers in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose, but also a few broadcast stations, local dailies, and some exciting weeklies and monthlies) have established an environment beat for a specific reporter. While these reporters have almost always come from within the organization, indicating lack of a financial commitment to the change, their presence on a news staff is the single most important factor in improved environmental coverage. Once they have established a community-wide reputation, they attract public relations materials from citizens' groups and industries, which often lead to good news stories; they can help change the focus of coverage from a national perspective (provided by the wire services and the networks) to a more local one; they can lobby for increased space and time for environmental news; and they can help overcome newsroom and management inertia which militates against quality coverage of any non-beat subject.

On one level this increased media attention to environmental deterioration has already paid off: ecology is now a national political issue which will no doubt be important in the 1972 campaigns; it has begun to educate the public to the necessities of recycling, conservation of resources, population control, and increased research expenditure on pollution control devices; it has produced such Federal legislation as the National Environmental Policy Act; and it has pushed the Nixon Administration into establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council on Environmental Quality, however cosmetic they may be. In the long run–if there is a long run–such general political activity and unfocused citizen concern may lead to the correction of many environmental abuses.

The marshalling of large numbers of citizens in a community to pressure local government officials and local industrial leaders is another, perhaps more direct and efficient, method of cleaning up the environment. And it is here on the local level, dealing with specific environmental problems, that the mass media in the San Francisco Bay Area (and no doubt in other metropolitan areas) have much room for improvement in performance.

The disease which permits 20-20 coverage of problems in other parts of the country, but produces myopia in dealing with similar problems at home, is neither new nor unusual in journalism. When caught by editorial writers it is called "Afghanistanism" and is characterized by the presentation of bold editorial solutions for the problems of countries halfway around the globe, but not a tough word for troubles at home.

The environment beat is particularly prone to such a malady, as this study has demonstrated. Media in growing communities have a direct financial stake in promoting increasing population and industrial growth, and they are often blinded to alternative land use patterns which may be more beneficial to the community on a long-term basis. The media frequently run stories on what industry is doing to improve environmental quality but, without a hard news peg, preferably from a government regulatory body, they are unwilling to single out and name companies which violate air and water pollution standards and in other ways refuse to stop polluting. When given the opportunity to run stories naming industrial polluters and rating the performance of elected officials charged with enforcing Bay Area air pollution emission standards, the media failed miserably. Too often regional stories have received extensive coverage while the publisher's own back yard goes up in smoke.

The eco-activist in the Bay Area seems to recognize these serious shortcomings–which tend to preclude citizen participation in a meaningful way–and consequently do not rely on the mass media for the environmental information they need to bolster government regulation and challenge industry. The mass news media are simply too slow, too timid, too understaffed, and too close to the business community at present to permit coverage at home which will be of direct benefit to the eco-activist. Local environmental news may help alert previously inert citizens to certain problems and convert them into environmental activists; and, on occasion, the media *can* focus community attention on a single problem, such as construction of the Southern Crossing span over San Francisco Bay or a massive oil spill. But for the day-to-day effort at cleaning up the environment (and all the lobbying at City Hall and Sacramento that entails) the news media have proven inadequate. The eco-activist relies instead on his club and trusted colleagues and experts for information; and, to a great extent, so do environmental reporters.

Indeed, the news media and the inactive citizen benefit from the work of the eco-activist in two ways. He provides much basic information to reporters; and, through his challenges to corporate and government decision-makers, he creates the necessary news pegs for getting the press involved. It is one thing for the media to report claims and counter-claims from opposing sides–and in the process educate readers and viewers on the subject under debate. It is quite another for the media *themselves* to research a subject and present the pros and cons. Thus a community that is full of activist-citizens–challenging decisions, making news, staging pseudo-events–is likely to have better news coverage as a result, and the Bay Area has an active citizenry.

While it *is* possible for an interested citizen to educate himself or herself on local environmental problems without use of the mass media, it is time-consuming and expensive. The media *should* be at the center of this problem locally, and most news executives, cognizant of the special, historical obligations of their profession quite apart from economics, want to play a more vital role in solving environmental problems in their own communities.

With this in mind, the following suggestions are made to the majority of news executives and reporters in the Bay Area who have demonstrated a concern for, and awareness of, the problems presented:

1) Those papers which have not as yet designated a staff member as the environmental reporter should do so, to get the ball rolling. He should be permitted as much time as possible for sorting through environmental public relations materials, meeting with local groups, and attending the sessions of government regulatory bodies. Many papers have already done this, even those of less than 15,000 circulation. The major, network-affiliated radio and television stations are, with a few notable exceptions, deficient in this regard, and they should attempt to regularize and centralize their environmental coverage.

2) The possibility of creating a special environmental news page or continuing broadcast feature should be considered. It might contain news of environmental legislation, public hearings and meetings on environmental matters, activities of industry and ecology organizations, and so on. Advertisers might be sought from the many companies manufacturing pollution control equipment.

3) Editors and reporters should make a greater effort to provide specific information the public can use: names of companies with lengthy records for violating anti-pollution standards and the public officials responsible; where government and academic reports can be obtained for further information; which groups are lobbying for and against environmental bills; and so on. If the news medium itself does not have time or space to discuss a complex subject, such as nuclear power and electric energy, it might offer readers and viewers a list of sources for further information and reading. This could prove to be a most valuable service (and, in a way, it looks forward to the time when the consumer will use the media for reference purposes with his own home computer).

4) Advertising acceptance departments should look with a more critical eye at the plethora of environmental advertisements crossing their desks; that is, those that claim a product or service will improve the quality of the environment. Where feasible, patently fraudulent or misleading ads should be rejected or sent back to the ad agency for modification. Above all, the mass media should not allow themselves to be used by industry in a campaign to lull the American consumer into the belief that corporate America is spending billions on pollution control and is about to solve the Nation's problems. Such is not the case, and the public should be put on guard against such a thesis.

5) Reporters should attempt to extend the "adversary" relationship they now maintain in covering public officials to reporting private industry as well. Historically the business community has failed to recognize the importance of a free and vigorous press in a democratic society. Since many pollution problems are centered in industry, its decisions must be reported as fully as those of government. As a corollary, news executives should press for extension of open record and open meeting statutes to cover public utilities as a first step to opening up the secrets of the business community. Transforming the puff of the average business/financial page into hard-hitting coverage of industry will not be easy, but it must be done if the private sector is to meet its responsibilities to the environment.

6) News executives should attempt to view and report on the growth of their communities with all the experience and wisdom about population increase, unplanned development, and regional growing pains that the past few years have brought. Most newspapers recognize that the "growth for growth's sake" ethic is no longer viable; editorial policy and coverage should reflect that knowledge.

7) Finally, without surrendering balance and fairness in reporting, newsmen should give more attention to non-government, non-industry news sources. Often citizens' groups and academicians have useful

contributions to make in solving environmental problems, but they are ignored because they do not have at their disposal the massive public information apparatus of business and government. The press should attempt to act as a counterweight.

In many respects the media in the Bay Area have performed yeomanly in reporting the deterioration of the environment. They and the rest of the news media have succeeded in awakening the public consciousness to the problems on a national scale. Now they must concentrate their efforts locally, and specifically. No one expects the environment to be made more habitable without great cost or pain. But if the media turn their attention to problems at home—and do not treat environmental news as a fad or as a problem only for other areas—there is reason for optimism.

Appendix I

THE PROBLEMS AND THE REPORTERS: AN OVERVIEW

Mail Questionnaire to Bay Area Environment Reporters

In advising this year-long examination of Bay Area media's environmental coverage, Dr. William L. Rivers and Dr. Joshua Lederberg suggested that environmental journalists really should be judged by their own objectives, rather than by researchers' assumed standards. The overall project's findings about coverage could then be compared to the media's own goals. And the project could plan its research to be useful to the newsmen themselves.

The only similar study found in a 1970 search of the literature is "The Pollution Issue: A Survey of Editorial Judgments," by the Urban Journalism Center, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University. As part of a larger investigation in 1970 of the media's role in the pollution issue the Center made a nationwide survey of metropolitan editors, not only on their coverage, but also on their views of the media's role in the pollution issue. The study did not, however, also analyze the newsmen's standards for coverage.

(In the Northwestern study, public interest was mentioned as a reason environment would be a big story in the 1970's 28 times, representing 50 percent of the editors, the seriousness of pollution itself 17 times, and the big political issue involved 13 times. Since the question dealt with the future and not the past of the issue, editors did not consider whether media followed or led public interest in the development of the issue.)

As a preliminary part of the Bay Area environmental coverage project, a mail survey of Bay Area newsmen was made to try to determine their standards, or "metaethic." The information, designed to serve as reference for other studies in the project, falls into four categories: 1) *description* of Bay Area environment reporters, 2) their *definition* of environmental reporting, 3) their views on the *quality* of Bay Area environment coverage, and 4) their *standards* for handling past, present, and future environment stories.

The questionnaire for the survey had a return of 80 percent in two mailings. The unusually high response may have come partly from somewhat personalized canvassing methods, as well as from current interest in the subject.

Each questionnaire was accompanied not only by the usual form covering letter, but also by a personal handwritten note on a separate piece of stationery. These notes were made possible because the addressee or someone in his organization had been contacted at least twice earlier in the process of preparing the questionnaire:

1) David Rubin, student leader for the overall project, had written to each organization at the beginning of the project describing the undertaking and asking the editor or news director addressed for his cooperation and participation. Letters replying to Rubin's letter could be answered in the personal notes accompanying the questionnaire.

2) Each organization had been telephoned about two months before the questionnaire was mailed in order to get a list of the environment reporters in the Bay Area. At the same time, the impending questionnaire had been mentioned and the editor's support requested. (A few more names were added to the list when editors indicated on returned questionnaires that they had reporters who were not mentioned in

the telephone survey.)

In addition, preliminary interviews were conducted with six Bay Area newsmen, further acquainting their organizations with the study. George Dusheck of KQED, Fred Garretson of the Oakland *Tribune*, Tom Harris of the San Jose *Mercury*, and Bruce Brugmann of the *Bay Guardian*, discussed general plans for the study. The questionnaire was pre-tested in personal interviews with Ken Castle of the Fremont *Argus* as a newspaper reporter, Robert Burgess of the Palo Alto *Times* as a newspaper (city) editor, Ben Williams of KPIX-TV as a broadcasting reporter, and Chet Casselman of KSFO radio as a broadcasting news director.

Two forms of the questionnaire were developed, one for editors and news directors, and one for environment reporters, with different questions on the first two pages, the same on the last two. A first mailing was sent October 12, 1970, the follow-up on October 26.

The 52 organizations surveyed included all the daily newspapers in the nine-county Bay Area, "weeklies which have shown an interest in environmental reporting," and all broadcasting stations with independent (not "rip and read") news operations. The "editor form" of the questionnaire was sent to the managing editor or equivalent at each newspaper and the news director at each broadcasting station, usually someone with whom the project had previously been in touch. The "reporter form" went to reporters these editors had named: 33 organizations, or 63 percent, had reporters they could call environmental, in a few cases more than one, for a total of 40 reporters.

In general the questionnaires were filled out more completely, quickly, and cheerfully than expected. Twelve respondents checked the option requesting anonymity, although "Don't give a damn" was another reaction. There was a higher return rate for reporters (83 percent) than for editors (79 percent). The reporters also tended to make longer and more frequent comments than editors.

Following are the questionnaires used in the survey, with marginals in percent, and a breakdown of the sample by type of organization, size of staff, and county.

"The Media & Environment" was sent to *editors* and news directors; "Environment Reporting" was sent to environment *reporters*. Questions on the last two pages of the forms are the same. Editors' and reporters' responses are given in *percentages* beside each answer.

(A comparison of *individual* responses shows a significant relationship between amount of time the reporter spends on environment and whether he views himself as having an environment beat:

		Viewed Self as Having Beat				
		Yes	To Some Extent	No	No. Ans.	TOTAL
Time spent on Environment	25% or less	2	9	7	0	18
	26% or more	10	2	1	2	15
	TOTAL	12	11	8		

$p < .01$

(The correlation between the editors' and their reporters' estimates of time spent on environment is $r = .4$, $p < .01$. The correlation is identical between the editor's assessment of whether he has a special reporter and the reporter's view of whether he has an environment beat.)

The Media & Environment

% results

NAME: ____________________ ORGANIZATION: ____________________ POSITION: EDITORS

Check here if you wish your answers to remain anonymous. ______

Any comments, qualifications, or elaborations will be appreciated.

1. Approximately what is the size of your reporting staff? (Count reporters, editors, news directors, but not cameramen, copyeditors, etc.)

NUMBER OF PEOPLE

20% 1-4 people
34% 5-9
19% 10-14
10% 15-19
10% 20-24
8% 25 (+)

2. In covering local environmental stories, do you:

22% (a) give them usually to a special reporter (or reporters) who has an environment beat?

39% (b) give them usually to a particular reporter (or reporters) although he has no formal environment beat?

39% (c) spread them throughout the staff in general?

3. IF YOUR ANSWER TO NO. 2 WAS (a) OR (b), that is if a particular reporter tends to handle environment stories, please answer the following. Otherwise, skip to question no. 4.

i. On the average, how much of your special reporter's (reporters') time is spent on stories you would consider environmental?

72%	0-25% of his (their time	20%	51-75%
4%	26-50%	4%	76-100%

ii. How long have you had a special reporter for environmental stories?

16	0-6 months	24	1-3 years
36	12 months	20	over 3 years

iii. Under what circumstances did you acquire a special reporter? Check as many items as apply.

12	Someone from outside was hired specifically for the job.
36	Someone already on the staff was assigned to the job.
32	Someone gradually handled more and more environment stories.
32	Someone covered beats which naturally included environment, such as regional government, public affairs, etc.
—	Other:
—	Details:

4. IF YOUR ANSWER TO NO. 2 WAS (c), that is if you spread environment stories throughout the staff in general, please answer the following. Otherwise, skip to question no. 5.

   i. Check as many items as apply. Environmental stories are not given to any special reporter because:

   25% such subjects can be covered just as well by general assignment reporters.
   6 such subjects can be covered better by general assignment reporters.
   19 we do not have enough local environment stories to justify a specialist.
   63 we cannot afford a specialist.
   0 no one on the staff is capable of handling such a beat.
   0 we are looking for someone to be a special reporter now.
   ___ other:

5. How would you assess the performance of the wire services in providing your organization with environmental news?

   2% excellent   27% good   41% mediocre   10% poor

   Comments: 20% no wire service

6. Do you feel your organization has adequately covered the California Water Plan?

   Comments: 51 YES   49 NO

7. Are you personally active in any conservation or ecology groups outside of work?

   15 YES   83 NO

   If yes, in what organizations?

8. The following is a list of hypothetical situations. Please indicate whether your decision would be "yes" or "no" in each case. Comments about the reasons for your decisions would also be appreciated.

   i. You become aware through a reliable source that a local smelting plant is discarding pollutants into the Bay every night, although no organized citizen or government group has yet raised the issue. Would you cover the story?

   95 YES   2 NO

   Comments:

   ii. A canning factory proposed to move into your area, and no one has brought up the possibility that the factory might pollute nearby waters. Would you investigate the pollution possibility?

   76 YES   17 NO

   Comments:

iii. An oil company which is one of your heavy advertisers has been advertising a new home pesticide. A reliable research team reports that the product is harmful to children and pets.

Would you cover the story?	95	YES	0	NO
Would you need approval from a higher executive level before covering the story?	10	YES	88	NO
Would you need approval of the publisher or station owner before covering the story?	5	YES	95	NO
Would you need to inform the advertising or sales manager if you were covering the story?	2	YES	93	NO
Would you check the research results with other sources to a greater extent than if the oil company were not an advertiser?	12	YES	85	NO

Comments:

9 There seems to be considerably more information about environment issues available to the public through the mass media today than there was a few years ago. What do you think might have caused the media's increased coverage of environment as a news story?

54%	public demand or interest	30%	pollution itself
5%	conservationist pressure	23%	Ehrlich, Nixon, other newsworthy stories
15%	media leadership		

10. Do you think the current attention to environment information is a fad? Or will it continue to be important for some time?

10% FAD

78% CONTINUING IMPORTANCE

7% BOTH

Comments:

11. (a) The following is a list of hypothetical news stories. Please place a check mark beside those which you consider to be "environment" stories.

7% A new heart transplant is performed at Stanford Hospital.

80% A city zoning change is proposed on the local ballot such that a large residential area near downtown can be converted to commercial use.

71% Power shortages like the New York "brown-outs" are predicted for the Bay Area by summer 1971.

100% Increases in pulmonary disease in the Bay Area are traced to a common element in smog.

5	A bill is passed prohibiting busing of school children.
100	A citizen's group is formed to protest airplane noise from a nearby airport.
29	A sugar substitute similar to cyclamates is linked to cancer in dogs.
83	A University of California research team projects smaller increases in population than were previously supposed.
95	Scientists report that shellfish are losing their shells in coastal areas with high levels of nitrogen fertilizers.
49	A section of underground rapid transit is opened for public use.
27	A tidal wave is predicted for the Peninsula coast line.
56	An increase in the popularity of IUD birth control devices among American women is reported.
95	A sewage recycling plant is set up in a neighboring town.

(b) Please define briefly what the term "environment reporting" means to you.

Thank you very much.

Environment Reporting
% results

NAME: ____________ ORGANIZATION: ____________ POSITION: REPORTERS

Check here if you wish your answers to remain anonymous. ________
Any comments, qualifications, or elaborations will be appreciated.

1. On the average, what percentage of your working time is spent covering stories you would consider environmental?

55%	1-25%	9	51-75%
15	26-50%	18	76-100%

2. Do you view yourself as having an environment beat? 36 YES 27 NO
33 TO SOME EXTENT

3. Do you hold any other jobs, freelance or part-time? 30 YES 67 NO

4. Are you personally active in any consveration or ecology groups outside of work? If yes, in what organizations?
18 YES 82 NO

5. (a) How old are you? ______ YEARS 18% 20-24 yrs, 30% 25-29, 18% 30-34, 34% 35(+)

(b) How many years have you been a newsman? ______ YEARS 42% 1-4 yrs, 18% 5-9, 12% 10-14

(c) What beats have you covered?

14% science 25% general 50% government 2% none other

(d) Did you
0 graduate from high school?
21% attend college? MAJOR: ______
48 graduate from college? MAJOR: ______ DEGREE: ______
27 do graduate work? FIELD: ______ DEGREE? ______

6. Would you check the sources of environmental information you use *frequently*:

30 scientific journals
61 conservation publications
73 conservation groups & spokesmen
48 seminars, institutes, conventions
48 university news releases
48 university professors
27 university task force reports

36 industry news releases
48 industry spokesmen
18 industry task force reports
55 government agency releases
52 government spokesmen
24 government task force reports
64 own field work

other mass media: 73 newspapers 18 radio 24 TV 73 magazines
others: ______

7. What magazines, books, journals, etc. do you read which you find helpful for environmental reporting in general?

30% Sierra Club
39% other conservation publications

15% Time, Newsweek
24% scientific journals
12% said none

8. What particular problems do you have covering environment stories? (Check as many items as apply)

33 difficulty finding a source which can give me a particular item of information
27 difficulty translating the jargon of the specialist into the language of my audience
67 too little time to investigate the story properly
15 too little space from editors or air time from directors
0 pressure not to cite companies which are polluting but are advertisers
3 pressure to cover or not to cover stories, pressure from groups such as: ______
3 "local boosterism": pressure, for instance, not to discourage industry or real estate from coming into the community
18 lack of reader or listener interest
12 difficulty fitting the story into a larger perspective, showing its relationship to general environmental problems
__ others:

9. Are there any environmental issues which your organization is not covering which you feel should be covered? If so, what are they? And why are they not covered?

61% mentioned at least one issue

10. Do you feel your organization has adequately covered the California Water Plan? 51 YES 45 NO

Comments:

11. The following is a list of hypothetical situations. Please indicate whether your decision would be "yes" or "no" in each case. Comments about the reasons for your decisions would also be appreciated.

i. You become aware through a reliable source that a local smelting plant is discarding pollutants into the Bay every night, although no organized citizen or government group has yet raised the issue. Would you cover the story?

90 YES 9 NO

Comments:

ii. A canning factory proposes to move into your area, and no one has brought up the possibility that the factory might pollute nearby waters. Would you investigate the pollution possibility?

73 YES 27 NO

Comments:

iii. An oil company which is one of your heavy advertisers has been advertising a new home pesticide. A reliable research team reports that the product is harmful to children and pets.

Would you cover the story?	97	YES	0	NO
Would you need approval from a higher executive level before covering the story?	21	YES	76	NO
Would you need approval of the publisher or station owner before covering the story?	9	YES	88	NO
Would you need to inform the advertising or sales manager if you were covering the story?	6	YES	91	NO
Would you check the research results with other sources to a greater extent than if the oil company were not an advertiser?	6	YES	88	NO

Comments:

12. There seems to be considerably more information about environment issues available to the public through the mass media today than there was a few years ago. What do you think might have caused the media's increased coverage of environment as a news story?

42% public demand or interest
12% conservationist pressure
15% media leadership
21% pollution itself
24% Ehrlich, Nixon, other newsworthy stories

13. Do you think the current attention to environment information is a fad? Or will it continue to be important for some time?

6 FAD 76 CONTINUING IMPORTANCE
18% BOTH

Comments:

14. (a) The following is a list of hypothetical news stories. Please place a check mark beside those which you consider to be "environment" stories.

12 A new heart transplant is performed at Stanford Hospital.
73 A city zoning change is proposed on the local ballot such that a large residential area near downtown can be converted to commercial use.
73 Power shortages like the New York "brown-outs" are predicted for the Bay Area by summer 1971.
94 Increases in pulmonary disease in the Bay Area are traced to a common element in smog.
21 A bill is passed prohibiting busing of school children.
94 A citizen's group is formed to protest airplane noise from a nearby airport.
42 A sugar substitute similar to cyclamates is linked to cancer in dogs.
91 A University of California research team projects smaller increases in population than were previously supposed.
91 Scientists report that shellfish are losing their shells in coastal areas with high levels of nitrogen fertilizers.
58 A section of underground rapid transit is opened for public use.
30 A tidal wave is predicted for the Peninsula coast line.
48 An increase in the popularity of IUD birth control devices among American women is reported.
94 A sewage recycling plant is set up in a neighboring town.

(b) Please define briefly what the term "environment reporting" means to you.

Thank you very much.

Description of Sample

Statistical results are based on responses received from 33 reporters (45% of the sample) and 41 editors (55%), in 41 organizations.

Organizations Represented

TV	15 respondents
Radio	10
Daily newspapers	39
Weekly newspapers	10
	74

Staff Size

	Number of People							
	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	Over 34
Number of Organizations	8	14	8	4	4	1	1	1

Representation by County

County	Density	Number of Newspapers	Respondents from Broadcasting
San Francisco	6930 people/sq. mi.	7	20
Alameda	1285	10	3
San Mateo	995	3	0
Santa Clara	787	7	2
Contra Costa	696	10	0
Marin	335	3	0
Solano	194	3	0
Sonoma	127	4	0
Napa	102	2	0
		49	25

Appendix II

THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION EXPLOSION

This study set out to document if there has been an increase over time in environmental news coverage and editorial comment by the San Francisco *Chronicle*, the Bay Area's highest circulation newspaper. A second major purpose was to determine the validity of the definition of environmental news (Chapter Two). If the definition was found to be a reliable tool in determining which *Chronicle* news stories were about "the environment," it was felt that this definition could be a useful tool in other studies.

Methodology

January 1965 through December 1970 was chosen for the time span, as it was felt that this span would give a good picture of recent changes and yet not require an unreasonable amount of effort. Throughout this period, the same edition—the "four star final"—was used; this is the edition found in the Stanford University microfilm collection.

In choosing the issues to be sampled, the researcher followed a suggestion from Stempel,[1] who found that a sample of 12 issues per year represented adequately the relative yearly proportion of newspaper content for a specific news area. It may be argued that this sample size cannot adequately represent the coverage of issue-areas which appear less regularly: environmental news may have appeared only sporadically in the first few years, and a sample size of 12, while adequate for other issue-areas, might grossly over- or under-represent the actual amount of environmental coverage. This criticism is valid, but a reasonable expenditure of effort required taking a moderately small sample. Twelve issues a year were deemed adequate; accordingly, one date from each month was randomly selected:

Month	Date	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Jan.	12	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sun.	Mon.
Feb.	6	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Thurs.	Fri.
March	10	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.
April	21	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.
May	20	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.
June	22	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.
July	2	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.
Aug.	17	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Sat.	Dun.	Mon.
Sept.	12	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Oct.	30	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Nov.	8	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Dec.	10	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.

This one-a-month pattern was chosen over the clustering of the 12 days together because it avoided possible seasonal variations (e.g., more news about smog in summer), it also avoided stories that might carry over onto consecutive days (e.g., an oil slick might be newsworthy for a week); these two factors might make the totals unrepresentative of the whole year.

Of the 72 dates chosen, only 70 issues were actually sampled. The January and February 1968 issues fell during a San Francisco newspaper strike, and it did not seem fair to compare the *Chronicle*'s gallant effort at an eight-page mimeographed newspaper with its usual full-scale production.

Because "straight news" would often be mixed in with entertainment news or obituaries, all pages in the Monday-through-Saturday issues were looked at *except*: women's pages, personal columns, want ads, sports news, financial news, and editorial and "op-ed" pages. (The editorials were analyzed separately.) The same general pattern was followed for the larger Sunday editions; environment news was sought in all sections *except*: women's columns, editorial pages, want ads, real estate ad section, financial pages, sports, comics and the smaller-sized "magazines" and entertainment guides. Travel and hobby pages were included, as were the inside pages of the *Chronicle*-produced "Sunday Punch" section. In addition, the *Examiner*'s Sunday editorials were analyzed separately.

Stories tallied were limited to the mutually exclusive categories of the definition and are roughly defined as 1) air pollution; 2) water pollution; 3) population explosion; 4) environmental additives (e.g., DDT); and 5) decreasing energy resources.

As the first test of possible inclusion within one of these categories, all headlines were scanned; so in practice, the definition was often reduced to coding for specific words: "smog," "pollution," "birth," "defoliant," "fallout," etc. But other stories which suggested the environmental area were also read (e.g., "Attack on Bay's Eight Big Problems"). Because most of the stories were short, those whose headlines suggested inclusion were read completely, since this method produces more accuracy than reading only the headline and lead.[2] Reading the whole article was also necessary because a number of stories were "borderline" cases, and whether they should be included could only be determined by thorough reading and frequent reference to the full definition. This lack of precision in the definition will be discussed later.

If a story continued onto another page, the continuation was counted as a separate story. Although this is perhaps not standard procedure for such a study, this was done because continuations have their own headlines which may possibly attract the reader who had not read the first part. (The number of stories continued was very small, however, and this procedure cannot be seen as altering the significance of the findings–especially since this practice did not affect the validity of the "number of column inches" measure.

The length of each article in column inches was also measured. Type, headlines and accompanying picture were all included in this measure; therefore the "number of inches" was really a measure of the total news hole allotted to the story.

A number of other measures were performed to test for possible changes in news judgment ("play") and article sources: 1) was there a photo or other art accompanying the story? 2) how many columns wide was the headline? 3) what was the position of a story on the page? (A story touching the top line was coded "top" and stories started lower on the page were coded "rest of page,") 4) in what location was the page on which the article appeared? Since these aspects of newspaper make-up are the means by which an editor can signify a story's importance, it was felt that these measures could show whether editorial judgment of the importance of environment stories had changed over time.

Two other measures were also made: source of article and source of article information. "Source of article" had four categories: 1) wire services–AP or UPI; 2) special services–New York *Times, Post-Times* Service, Reuters, etc.; 3) staff byline or "Our Correspondent"; 4) no identification–probably a press release.

"Source of article information" was determined by reading the story; in cases where there was more than one source, the major source was to be given credit for the article. The categories were: 1) government–local, state and national agencies, local, state and national legislatures and legislators, the military, and any other officials of governmental bodies; 2) industry and industry groups–includes chambers of commerce and management associations; 3) academia–professors, scientists, students and student groups whose university affiliations were named; 4) private (non-governmental) groups or their spokesmen–conservation groups, labor unions, political parties; 5) private persons–no affiliations mentioned; and 6) other–the U.N., the Pope, and not-specified. In taking these two measures, it was felt that some trends might be noticeable over time, such as increasing staff attention to the environment or increasing concern by private environmental action groups.

Following similar procedures, editorials were also examined. Only "under-the-masthead" editorials–not editorial columns, letters-to-the-editor or cartoons–were considered. The same issues were used in sampling editorials and the number of inches in each category were measured. The position of the editorial–top or second ("second" included editorials in the "third" position as well)–was also coded. The other measures–head column width, photo and source of article–were not considered, since these were constant for all editorials; source of article information was usually not mentioned within the editorial, and thus was also not tallied.

Results

As the tables in Chapter Two show, a significant increase was found in coverage of the environment over the six-year period. Since the "number of articles" and "number of inches" measures seemed to correlate closely if an allowance is made for the inclusion of photos in the inches measure, a test for significance was made only on the "number of inches" measure. Although there is not necessarily a linear relationship between the two variables (elapsed time and number of inches), the use of a regression line is one reasonable way to test for a monotone increase in inches over time. Before computation, the data for 1968 were adjusted by a factor of 1.3 to make them equivalent to the other years when 12 issues (rather than 10) were sampled. Also, to make computation easier, the x values for the years (the numbers 1965-1970) were transformed to odd numbers -5 through +5. The line $y = 241.18 + 61.02x$ was found to describe the points, with a standard error of 84.3. Performance of a t test yielded $t_4 = 4.94$, and p is less than .01. No precise count was made of the total number of pages or the total space allotted to news, but this researcher did not notice any appreciable differences in these factors over the six-year period and thus concludes that these factors did not detract from the demonstrated increase in environment coverage.

Results from the other measures were not as conclusive. The number of photos accompanying environment stories did increase, but the change was no greater than one would expect, given that the number of inches had also increased.

The measure of headline width similarly did not show any significant differences (Table I). The only noticeable change was found in the number of five-, six-, seven-, and eight-column headlines in 1970. Since the numbers are so small, this rise could also reasonably be expected from the increased number of environmental inches that year. No check of the headline width on other, non-environmental stories was made as a control for a possible change in the *Chronicle*'s page make-up practices, so it is impossible to conclude definitely that the wider headlines in 1970 were due to an editorial judgment that environment stories should be given greater play.

Table I

HEADLINE WIDTH

	Number of Stories with Given Headline Width (in columns)								
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1965	10	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	15
1966	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
1967	6	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	11
1968	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
1969	5	11	7	2	0	0	0	0	25
1970	13	13	2	5	1	2	1	1	38

Regarding the "story position" measure, it was expected that more environment stories would be placed at the top of the page as editors judged these articles to be more important. This was what happened, although the change was not significant. A contingency table method was used, comparing actual values with expected values, given the null hypothesis that there would be no relationship between elapsed time and story position. Computation yielded chi$^{2}_{5}$ = 7.46, and p is greater than .05.

A similar hypothesis was tested for the "page location" measure. It was expected that environment stories would move from "the back of the book" to page one, as editors began to accord more importance to such articles. Again, the expected difference was found, but the results were not significant. A contingency table method and chi square were again used. (chi$^{2}_{20}$ = 27.42, and p is greater than .10).

In the final two measures—"article source" and "article information source"—the expected changes were not found. Although it was believed that there might be an increase in staff-written articles, relative to other sources, no increase was found that was not proportionate with the overall increase in the number of environment articles published (Table II). On the whole, more of the published environmental stories were written by the two wire services, followed by the *Chronicle* staff.

Table II
ARTICLE SOURCE

Number of Articles from Each Given Source

Year	Wire Service	Special Service	Staff	No Identification
1965	5	3	2	5
1966	1	1	4	2
1967	7	0	2	2
1968	2	1	2	2
1969	10	3	9	3
1970	12	9	9	8
TOTAL	37	17	28	22

The measure of "article information source" was also inconclusive (Table III). Although the number of articles attributing information to private (non-governmental) groups increased, again this rise was no greater than what might be expected from the overall increase in the number of stories. The overwhelming majority of stories relied upon information from government sources. A rough breakdown showed that most of the stories attributed to government sources could be traced to state and local agencies, followed by federal agencies, and then legislators on all levels.

Table III
ARTICLE INFORMATION SOURCE

Number of Articles with Given Information Source

Year	Government	Industry	Academia	Non-Government Groups	Private Persons	Other
1965	11	1	1	0	1	1
1966	6	0	0	0	0	2
1967	8	0	0	0	0	3
1968	2	1	2	1	0	1
1969	18	0	2	2	0	3
1970	20	2	3	4	3	6
TOTAL	65	4	8	7	4	16

The total number of editorials—seven—was so small that no significant findings could be made. There was no increase either in the number of editorials or in the number of inches. Nor was there a change in the position—top or second—of the editorials; most were in the top position.

The Definition

As described in Chapter Two, the replication procedure to test the validity of the definition yielded substantial agreement. There was some disagreement in coding in two major areas, the first of which concerned category 3, "population explosion." There was confusion over whether all articles referring to birth control should be included, or only those articles referring to birth control as a means of curbing population growth. This is one area where the definition should be written more precisely. The other area of disagreement was category 4, "environmental additives." Here there was confusion over whether atomic radiation and other radiological pollutants should be included.

In view of these problems, this rewording of categories 3 and 4 of the definition is suggested:

3) Human population explosion and control: articles or stories dealing with the possibility of overpopulation and ways to prevent or cope with the increase. *Stories related to birth control or abortion methods should be included only if these articles refer to birth control or abortion as a means of curbing population increase.*

4) Environmental additives: articles or stories dealing with natural elements or chemical compounds artificially introduced into the ecosystem by possible build-up in and transmission through the food chain, or which cause upset in the ecosystem through destruction of a species with possible detrimental effects to plant and animal life; for example, DDT and other pesticides, herbicides, mercury, *fallout and other radiological pollutants, defoliants, and crude or refined oil spilled at sea.* This does not include cigarette smoking, fluoride or cyclamates.

The limitations of this definition are obvious: many areas termed "environmental" are still not included. San Francisco area concern over Bay-filling and the establishment of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission could not be included within this definition; nor could the campaign to "Save the Redwoods" and establish a Redwood National Park. Similarly, many stories about the Super-Sonic Transport plane could not be included, because they did not mention specifically the possible environmental effects of this airplane—only how the legislative battle was proceeding in Congress. Other articles clearly related to "the environment" but not included within this definition concerned "Earth People's Park," Lake Tahoe development, garbage recycling, the effects upon a bird species of building a dam, and nuclear blasting for a canal. To broaden the scope of the definition, perhaps four more categories could be added: 1) noise pollution; 2) effects of human land use and development upon "natural" ecosystems; 3) garbage problems and recycling of wastes; and 4) general (non-specific) environmental awareness—e.g., the movement towards "naturally ecological living."

But of course, one can take a truly ecological position and correctly construe "the environment" to encompass *everything,* and thus some limitations of the definition are mandatory if it is to be a workable research tool. The five categories of the original definition are actually quite adequate; the additional categories would not have added many more inches to the overall total. Thus, with the modifications suggested in the five original categories, the definition is a reliable research tool for use in further studies of media coverage of the environment issue.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stempel, G. H., "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," *Journalism Quarterly*, v. 29 (Summer 1952), pp. 333-334.

2. Haskins, Jack B., "Headline-and-Lead Scanning vs. Whole-Item Reading in Newspaper Content Analysis, *Journalism Quarterly*, v. 43 (Summer 1966), pp. 333-335.

Appendix III

ECO-ACTIVISTS AND THE NEWS MEDIA

The Questionnaire and Interview

The following questionnaire was used for the survey. Interviewers read the introduction verbatim, and followed with only as much information as the respondent insisted upon in order to begin.

The results for two questions, 8 and 14, are not given in this report. Results for 8 were deleted because, first, it was asked only in order to lead into question 9, and secondly, the results were quite inconclusive. Environmental concerns were very evenly distributed among the sample.

Results for question 14 were deleted because the question itself proved to be very faulty. The question was meant to indicate whether respondents knew of a *better* source than mass media. However, its wording allowed for replies in the affirmative if the respondent simply meant he knew of an adequate source *in addition to* mass media.

All respondent questions concerning the survey were deferred until the questionnaire was completed.

Telephoning was done between 6:30 and 9:30 weekdays, and one Sunday afternoon, in March 1971.

Telephone survey:

Hello. My name is ________ , calling from Stanford University. We're working on an ecology telephone survey, supported by the National Science Foundation, and have drawn your number for a possible telephone interview. Could you spare about ten minutes for us? . . . studying ecology and conservation information diffusion for the Communications Department . . .

1. Has anyone in your family supported a conservation or ecology group in the past year? (Which one(s)? ________________________ ___ 1

IF YES:
2. About how long ago did you join? ________________________ ___ 2
3. Why? ________________________ ___ 3
= (1 ecology/2 camper, hiker/3 publications/4 combination 1,2)
4. Have you held any offices or committee chairmanships in the past year? (NUMBER)
________________________ ___ 4

5. Have you attended any conservation meetings or activities in the past year? (NUMBER)
________________________ ___ 5
(0=0/1=1-3/2=4-5/3=6-10/4=10-20/5=21-50/6=51+)

6. Do you remember having *sought* information on an ecology issue recently? IF YES:
Where did you seek it? ________________________ ___ 6
((1 club/2 ind/3 paper/4 radio, tv/5 mag/6 book/7 library/8 govt./9 university))
IF YES:
7. Did anything in particular prompt you to seek that information? (WHAT)
________________________ ___ 7
((1 club/2 ind/3 paper/4 radio, tv/5 mag/6 book/7 'concern,' etc.))

8. Is there any particular ecology area or issue you are most interested in right now? IF YES:
What is it? ________________________ ___ 8
((1 air/2 water/3 noise/4 pop/5 space/6 wildlife/7 waste (recyc)/8 *specific*))
IF YES:

ECO-ACTIVISTS / 2

9. If you needed information on this now, where would you seek it? ____________________ ___ 9
((1 club/2 ind/3 paper/4 radio, tv/5 mag/6 book/7 library/8 govt./9 university))

10. What source would you usually consult for ecology information? ____________________ ___ 10
((1 club/2 ind/3 paper/4 radio, tv/5 mag/6 book/7 library/8 govt./9 university))

11. Where do you get most of your daily, *general* news? (RADIO TV NEWSPAPERS PEOPLE)
____ ___ 11
((1 radio/2 tv/3 papers/4 people/5=2 electrics/6 paper & electrics/7 all))

12. How would you rate Bay Area mass media (newspapers, tv & radio) *in general* on coverage of ecology issues . . .1 Exc/2 Good/3 Adequate/4 Poor/5 Very Poor ___ 12

13. Is any radio, tv or newspaper exceptionally better than the others on ecology? IF YES: Which one(s)?) ____________________ ___ 13
((1 radio/2 tv/3 paper/4 combination))

14. Do you know a source of ecology information other than the mass media which probes deeply enough, and asks enough questions? IF YES: What is it? ____________________ ___ 14
((1 club/2 ind/8 govt./9 university))

15. Do you know a more up-to-date source of ecology news and information than the mass media? IF YES: What is it? ____________________ ___ 15
((1 club/2 ind/8 govt./9 university))

16. How long have you lived in the Bay Area? ____________________ ___ 16
((1=1-5/2=6-10/3=11-20/4=20+))

17. What is your age? FIRST DIGIT ____________________ ___ 17
((1=1-19/2=20-29/3=30-39/4=40-49/5=50-59/6=60-69/7=70-79/8=80-89))

18. How many years of school have you completed? ____________________ ___ 18
((1=hs, 12/2=some col, 13-15/3=col, 16/4=ma,16,17/5=Ph.D./6=20+))

19. What is your occupation? ____________________ ___ 19
((0=none/1 prof, exec./2 ofc./3 bl. col./4 house/5 student))

20. NO QUESTION – CODE SPACE (is respondent a 'heavy' / 2-stage flow) ___ 20
1 = 'yes' blank = 'no'

The Sample

The Sierra Club has two chapters–San Francisco Bay and Loma Prieta–in the Bay Area, with a total combined membership of 39,242 as of December 31, 1970. From computer printout rolls compiled that date we drew our random sample.

Membership rolls were available only as alphabetical-by-chapter printouts. The computer was not programmed to deliver any type of listing other than complete. We drew every 50th page, starting with page 7 (selected randomly), and beginning again with page 4 (selected randomly). We received a total of 32 pages, with about 40 names per page.

Chapter rolls contained no telephone numbers, so some members were eliminated because of unlisted numbers.

We were limited by budget to the Stanford Bay Area free call tie line radius. This was considered a large and diverse enough radius (which included San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, San Jose) to be representative of the entire Bay Area, so a number of club members outside the tie line area were dropped from the sample without creating bias.

The rolls listed each member of a family which had multiple membership separately. Thus the pages contained as many as 4 or 5 persons within the same household. We called such households and spoke to the Sierra Club member most readily available, and then eliminated the rest from the sample.

By the time we had completed 301 interviews, it was determined that the results were running so strongly in one direction for each question that interviewing could be terminated.

Appendix IV

THE ENVIRONMENT: A DIFFICULT SUBJECT TO COVER

POLLUTION, PRESS RELATIONS AND PRESS PERFORMANCE

To analyze newspaper coverage of the Stanford air pollution report, a content analysis of 28 daily papers in nine Bay Area counties was conducted. A "daily" was defined as a newspaper publishing at least five days a week. The week-long sample period began September 9, 1970, the day prior to the press conference announcing the Groth report, and concluded September 15. Papers included in the sample, by county, were:

San Francisco:	San Francisco *Chronicle* San Francisco *Examiner*
San Mateo:	Redwood City *Tribune* San Mateo *Times*
Santa Clara:	San Jose *Mercury* San Jose *News* Palo Alto *Times*
Alameda:	Oakland *Tribune* Hayward *Review* Berkeley *Gazette* Fremont *News-Register* San Leandro *Morning News* Alameda *Times-Star* Livermore *Herald and News* Fremont *Argus*
Marin:	San Rafael *Independent-Journal*
Solano:	Vallejo *Times-Herald* Vallejo *News-Chronicle* Fairfield-Suisun *Daily Republic*
Napa:	Napa *Register*
Sonoma:	Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat* Petaluma *Argus-Courier*
Contra Costa:	Richmond *Independent* Contra Costa *Times* Concord *Daily Transcript* Antioch *Ledger* Pittsburg *Post-Dispatch* Martinez *Morning News-Gazette*

The basic unit of the content analysis was the individual news story, feature story or editorial whose predominant subject matter dealt with the Groth report. (There were no "borderline" cases regarding subject matter in the data.) The individual article, including headline and any graphics, constituted both the recording unit and the context unit. Each article was analyzed according to the following categories:

1. Space Allotted to Item—Recorded as column-inch length, rounded off to nearest inch; photos, graphics and headline space measured as part of article.
2. Type of Item—Recorded as news story, feature story or editorial.
3. Prominence—Recorded as page number on which story began.
4. Authorship—Recorded as name of reporter (if bylined), name of wire service (if given); stories were also compared with the Stanford News Service press releases to ascertain which sections of media coverage were paraphrases or verbatim reprints of news release material.
5. Thematic Issues—Ten thematic issues were selected from the Stanford air pollution report and their presence or absence in newspaper articles published during the sample period was coded. The presence or absence of the issues was taken as an index of how completely individual newspapers informed their readership about the breadth of topics contained in the Groth report. Two of the issues (E and F, below) were chosen as indicators of how the individual newspapers covered the performances of *local* industries and elected officials, and another (J) as an indicator of whether the paper prescribed for its readership specific courses of anti-pollution action, which were detailed in one section of the Stanford report. The presence of each issue was coded if even the most general mention of it was made in the article; i.e., the quantity of coverage given any issue was not considered in constructing this index (although such information was noted in a more general outline which was made for the contents of each story.) The following issues were coded:
    A. BAAPCD ineffectiveness in controlling air pollution.
    B. Report's evaluation of BAAPCD Board of Directors (as entire group) and/or BAAPCD Advisory Council (as entire group).
    C. Industrial involvement or influence in BAAPCD policy-making.
    D. Attitudes of industries (as entire group) about pollution control.
    E. Evaluation of industries located in county where newspaper publishes (if applicable).
    F. Evaluation of performance of BAAPCD Directors from county where newspaper publishes (if applicable).
    G. Environmental impact of automobiles and/or need for restructuring transportation systems.
    H. Miscellaneous sources of pollution (other than autos or industry).
    I. Any results from Groth report public opinion polls.
    J. Suggested activities for general public.

Coding operations were performed solely by the author of this study. Consequently, no precise statistic can be offered as a measure of reliability in repeated operations by different coders. The data for the analysis was quite compact, especially after articles had been collected from the newspapers. Ironically, this was an instance when the most revealing feature of the data was the *absence* of much of it; i.e., the failure of 11 out of 28 newspapers sampled to provide any coverage of the Groth report. The newspaper article search and the coding operations were performed twice (with similar results) to provide an additional check against error. This information about the absence of a reliability statistic is intended, then, not as an apology for any suspected miscalculations in the research, but rather for the benefit of any readers who may be statistical purists.

To gain perspective on television and radio coverage of the Stanford air pollution report, transcripts

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	San Francisco *Examiner*
San Mateo:	Redwood City *Tribune*
	San Mateo *Times*
Santa Clara:	San Jose *Mercury*
	San Jose *News*
	Palo Alto *Times*
Alameda:	Oakland *Tribune*
	Hayward *Review*
	Berkeley *Gazette*
	Fremont *News-Register*
	San Leandro *Morning News*
	Alameda *Times-Star*
	Livermore *Herald and News*
	Fremont *Argus*
Marin:	San Rafael *Independent-Journal*
Solano:	Vallejo *Times-Herald*
	Vallejo *News-Chronicle*
	Fairfield-Suisun *Daily Republic*
Napa:	Napa *Register*
Sonoma:	Santa Rosa *Press-Democrat*
	Petaluma *Argus-Courier*
Contra Costa:	Richmond *Independent*
	Contra Costa *Times*
	Concord *Daily Transcript*
	Antioch *Ledger*
	Pittsburg *Post-Dispatch*
	Martinez *Morning News-Gazette*

The basic unit of the content analysis was the individual news story, feature story or editorial whose predominant subject matter dealt with the Groth report. (There were no "borderline" cases regarding subject matter in the data.) The individual article, including headline and any graphics, constituted both the recording unit and the context unit. Each article was analyzed according to the following categories:

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    - C. Industrial involvement or influence in BAAPCD policy-making.
    - D. Attitudes of industries (as entire group) about pollution control.
    - E. Evaluation of industries located in county where newspaper publishes (if applicable).
    - F. Evaluation of performance of BAAPCD Directors from county where newspaper publishes (if applicable).
    - G. Environmental impact of automobiles and/or need for restructuring transportation systems.
    - H. Miscellaneous sources of pollution (other than autos or industry).
    - I. Any results from Groth report public opinion polls.
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To gain perspective on television and radio coverage of the Stanford air pollution report, transcripts of broadcasts pertaining to the report were solicited from operations directors of 15 stations. Television stations included KGO, KPIX, KRON and KQED, all in San Francisco; KTVU and KBHK, Oakland; and KNTV, San Jose. Radio outlets included KCBS, KGO, KSFO, KNBR, KFRC and KSAN, all in San Francisco; KNEW, Oakland; and KPFA, Berkeley. These represented the largest broadcasting outlets, with news staffs, in the Bay Area. Seven stations (5 television, 2 radio) replied to the query. Most said actual transcripts of coverage were not available; two indicated they were unaware of the report. (Unlike newspapers, broadcast stations apparently do not maintain a morgue of their previous coverage, which can easily be accessed by the public, or as background material for their own reporters.) Some directors offered recollections of specific coverage of the Groth report, but the accuracy of these comments is, naturally, a matter of speculation. The author of this study did monitor several stations in the Bay Area (as indicated in the text of the report), but the observations about their coverage are empirical, because the research was not systematic in the manner of the newspaper content analysis. The absence of "hard" data makes evaluation of the *overall* quality of broadcast coverage problematical, although the comments on *specific* stations featured in the report represent factual accounts. The author regrets that the section on broadcast coverage lacks the specificity of that on newspapers, but calls the reader's attention to the disparity.

There are at least two other possible influences upon media coverage of the Groth report which our sampling procedures could have obscured. First, the sample, designed to test the initial wave of coverage, extended for only six days following the press conference. A journalist could conceivably have written a feature story dealing in part, or entirely, with the study and it might have been published more than a week after the press conference. Certainly, the possibility of "cutting off" a sample too soon besets nearly all research studies utilizing this method. An additional question arises concerning the timelessness of the Stanford study as an information source for the media. Reporters with an interest in environmental coverage may have filed the report, planning to use it as a reference in future stories dealing with air pollution problems in the Bay Area. In such an instance, the report could have a long-range impact which a one-week sample would not reveal.

Press Release (Sample)

Stanford University News Service—for information contact Robert Lamar

Editors: This news release covers part of a Bay Area air pollution report to be announced at a press conference at 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, in the offices of the Stanford Board of Trustees, 600 California St., San Francisco.

Advance for Release in afternoon newspapers Thursday, Sept. 10, 1970.

Stanford—(second of four articles)

Many Bay Area industries have made significant strides toward the control of air pollution but most of them still leave a lot of room for improvement, according to a report, "Air Pollution in the San Francisco Bay Area," published Thursday (Sept. 10) by a group of Stanford students.

Along with facts about control programs, the report contains figures on the actual emissions of several major pollutants from most of the companies that were studied. Industry fought the release of such data by the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District (BAAPCD), earlier this year, but the information was eventually made available.

The report also names firms that have appeared repeatedly on monthly lists of companies receiving violation notices from the BAAPCD.

The Stanford Workshop on Air Pollution, a group of 70 graduate and undergraduate students, investigated more than 30 local industries as part of their nine-month study of this region's air pollution problems.

In at least 20 cases, the students paid visits to the plants, took tours and examined control devices, and held lengthy discussions with the air pollution control experts of the companies. Their report presents detailed descriptions of the processes and air pollution problems of oil refineries, steel mills, cement plants, and numerous other operations.

Many of the same companies are also listed as frequent violators of the BAAPCD's regulations, but the runaway leader in that category is the Lloyd A. Fry Roofing Co. of San Leandro, which received 98 tags in 1969.

The students found that most of the companies they contacted had done a great deal to reduce the pollution from their operations, but charge that "Industry has moved only as far and as fast as required to by law." They assert that "the industrial community still has a long way to go before it will be as clean as the community as a whole could wish it."

The young Stanford investigators found that the vast majority of industries are operating in compliance with the regulations of the BAAPCD. Industry as a group has adopted a policy of complete cooperation with the regulatory agency.

But industry "still causes significant problems," the student group claims. They suggest that emissions can be reduced through the enactment of tighter regulations requiring more sophisticated control.

The BAAPCD is currently at work drawing up more stringent rules. Industry, the Stanford group says, has been participating actively in the process.

Acting through its chief lobby, the Bay Area League of Industrial Associations (BALIA), industry has been negotiating with the staff and Advisory Council of the BAAPCD over the form and substance of the new rules.

The student researchers, who attended most of these negotiating sessions, report that industry has resisted and often strongly opposed the imposition of tougher standards in several areas. And, the students conclude, industry has occasionally succeeded in weakening regulations.

Industry's resistance stems from the fact that pollution control is a complex and often very costly proposition. But the students criticize industry for employing a form of cost benefit analysis that is typically "biased in favor of rejecting expenditures for pollution control."

The Stanford group accuses industry of "throwing out whole categories of damages" caused by pollution, and quotes one local industrialist as saying: "All that would be gained is an aesthetic improvement, so we don't feel it would be a justifiable investment."

While the students agree that many of the problems industry must face in dealing with air pollution are real ones, and concede that there is some justification for industry's slow, cautious approach, they accuse Bay Area industry and BALIA of too much "foot-dragging" in recent months.

The authors of "Air Pollution in the San Francisco Bay Area" point out that political pressure generated by the current wave of public interest in environmental problems may force industry to clean up much faster than the companies themselves would like to.

In fact, the students urge industry to be more open in explaining their air pollution problems to the public, claiming that unless industry can get its side of the story out to the people, the industrial community may face control laws that they will find very hard to live with.

END ADVANCE FOR RELEASE IN AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS THURSDAY, SEPT. 10, 1970.

COVERING THE CWP

Editorial page editors of the newspapers surveyed received this questionnaire:

1. Have you run an editorial on the California Water Plan any time since January 1969? How many?
2. What has been the newspaper's editorial position on the California Water Plan during this period?
3. What has been the source of information used for writing these editorials? (i.e. releases from the Department of Water Resources; pamphlets from the Committee of Two Million) Please be specific.
4. What information do you receive from the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Game and other organizations or corporations that support the Water Plan? What are these other organizations? Is this information largely solicited or unsolicited?
5. What information do you receive from organizations that oppose the Water Plan? What specific organizations? Is this information largely solicited or unsolicited?
6. Do you receive considerably more information from one side or the other? Which side?
7. Have you received letters from readers expressing an opinion on the Water Plan? Approximately how many? What percentage of the total reader mail does this represent?
8. Have most letters been in response to a specific editorial?
9. What has been the proportion of letters pro to con the Water Plan?
10. What proportion of the letters you have received concerning the Water Plan have you published?
11. Within how long a period after an editorial on the Water Plan were the letters published? Were they generally published on one day, on consecutive days, or randomly?
12. Have you published an equal number of letters favoring the Water Plan as letters opposing it? More favoring it? More opposing it?
13. Additional comments.

Editors of the surveyed newspapers received a letter which asked if the newspaper had done any investigative reporting on the CWP since 1969, when it was published, how long it was, if it was in one or more parts, who researched it, what it was titled, if it had an editorial bias, and what it covered.

Editorial directors of radio and television stations were sent this questionnaire:

1. Has your station run an editorial on the California Water Plan since January 1969? How many editorials? When? (Please give dates and air time) What was the length of each editorial?
2. What editorial position did the station take on the California Water Plan during this period?
3. What was the source of information used to prepare these editorials? (i.e. releases from the Department of Water Resources; pamphlets from the Committee of Two Million) Please be as specific as possible.
4. Who prepared the editorials? (i.e. General Manager, etc.)
5. For each editorial listed above was someone given equal time to present an opposing editorial opinion? If there was no reply for one or more editorials, why was this?

6. What was the time lag between each editorial presented by the station and the reply editorial?
7. In each instance who gave the reply editorial and what organization were they representing?
8. In each instance did someone representing an organization with an opposing viewpoint request equal reply time or did the station ask someone to present an opposing editorial?
9. If more than one person or organization requested reply time, how did the station select the respondent?
10. Does the station require that a copy of the reply editorial be submitted before it is broadcast? Does the station reserve the right to edit the text of an editorial before it is broadcast?
11. Has the station received letters from viewers expressing an opinion on the Water Plan? Approximately how many letters? What does the station do with letters it receives?
12. What information does the station receive unsolicited from organizations supporting the Water Plan? What specific organizations?
13. What information does the station receive unsolicited from organizations opposing the Water Plan? What specific organizations?
14. Does the station receive considerably more unsolicited information from one side than the other? Which side?

Managers of broadcasting stations received a letter which asked:

If you have carried any discussion of the California Water Plan:

a) On what show? What was the date of the show? Who was the moderator?
b) Who appeared on the show to discuss the Water Plan? Was any speaker associated with any particular group, as the Department of Water Resources or the Sierra Club? Was any speaker specifically pro or con the Water Plan?
c) How was each speaker selected to appear on the show?
d) Who is notified in advance of the topic of the discussion?
e) What is the general format of the show? (I.e., debate; question and answer.) What is the air time of the show? How often is it aired?

Television managers were additionally asked if the station had done a news documentary on the CWP since January 1969, when it was aired, how long it was, if it was in one or more parts, who researched and wrote it, what it was titled, if it had an editorial bias, and what it covered.

Appendix V

COVERING THE NUCLEAR POWER DEBATE

Directions to Coders

Portion of Each Issue Coded: Of non-advertising material, the entire newspaper will be coded with the exception of sports, women's, society, comics, obituaries, amusements, and the arts. All advertising will be coded with the exception of the classifieds and amusements. The same rules apply for Sunday editions, although Sunday travel sections and non-locally produced Sunday supplements will not be coded.

Specific Content to be Coded: All content (according to the above criteria) is to be coded which contains, either in the head, the text, or the caption, any of the following words, phrases, or their combinations:

nuclear power plant
atomic power plant

radiation standard
radiation level
radiation threshold

electrical blackout or brownout

supply
demand
consumption
production
} of electric power

There are two exceptions to the rule. *All* advertisements paid for by an electric utility are to be coded. In the case of utilities which market both electric power and natural gas (such as PG&E), code only those advertisements selling electric power or the utility itself. We are not interested in ads which *only* sell gas. The other exception concerns blackout/brownout articles. We are interested only in those stories which report blackouts caused by failure at the plant site—for reasons of power shortage, power overload, damage directly to the plant, etc. We are not concerned with blackouts caused by downed power lines (as the result of a rainstorm) or an acrobatic squirrel. If the coder is unable to determine the reason for the blackout, code the article.

It is expected that the vast majority of the articles coded will contain mention of either a nuclear or atomic power plant.

Coding of Each Piece of Content: First the coder should become familiar with the coding sheet. This indicates the nature of the information sought.

Under "date" of issue, indicate if the issue is a Sunday edition. If not, the date itself is sufficient.

Under "type of article," note that news articles are to be divided into two categories: news peg and non-news peg articles. In determining a news peg, keep in mind that we are interested in what got the paper or reporter involved in the story. This will generally appear in the first or second paragraph of the story, and will be some statement, action, or report (see breakdown on the coding sheet) which happened, or will happen, in close chronologic proximity to the story. If the box "Article with News Peg" is checked, then one or more of the boxes underneath should also be checked indicating what sort of news peg it was. In most cases a single news peg will be clear. However, a utility may make a statement about what its vice-president said at the recent public hearing. In such confusing instances, more than one box may be checked. But in all such cases of multiple checking, the coder should explain his reasons in the comments section at the end of the coding sheet.

In determining the length of an article, the coder should include headlines and picture captions in the measurements. One-half column inch or greater should be rounded up; less than one-half inch, rounded down. Picture and ad sizes need only be indicated as "x columns by y inches."

If the article appears on an inside page of special significance (such as the business page, a second front page, a special local news page) indicate it by checking the box for "special section page," and add the appropriate description.

Under "Adversary Questions Covered in Coded Article," the coder is doing a thematic analysis of each piece of content. A reading of the 20 categories (plus "other") will demonstrate what points in the nuclear power debate are of interest in this study. The 20 categories will not permit the coding of ***all*** content in each article. But the categories are exhaustive insofar as they cover all the important points of debate between proponents and opponents of nuclear power. They are the subjects an ***adversary*** press would probe in reporting utility plans and the nuclear power dilemma in general, regardless of the paper's own editorial position. Such general information as how a nuclear power plant operates, what it will look like, and the estimated cost of the plant are not specifically coded, nor are the vague and general statements of utility critics and supporters which indicate that there are points of debate about nuclear power plants, but not what those points are. The purpose of this content analysis is to permit an assessment of the adversary relationship between the press and public utilities as reflected in coverage of power plant siting; specifically, coverage at critical incidents in the siting procedure–critical to the public's entering the decision-making process.

Once a coder is familiar with the 20 adversary questions, he should read through the news article, editorial, etc. and determine which of the questions are specifically raised. For a lengthy, detailed piece he might check a dozen or more boxes; for an article simply announcing upcoming public hearings he would check only the box on public access to the siting procedure. Beneath each box checked the coder should write out the sources of information quoted directly or indirectly by the newspaper. These sources can be quite specific (such as named individuals), less specific (such as utility spokesmen or the AEC), or indefinite (such as plant opponents). But in all cases where a source is stated, and the paper or reporter is not speaking for himself, it should be noted by the coder. All proper and collective nouns not listed as sources in this way should be noted at the end of the form in the appropriate space.

In case of an editorial, column, or letter, in addition to coding it as above, the coder should also briefly (in one or two sentences) summarize the position of the author.

At the end of the coding sheet, the coder should comment on the nature of the non-adversary material in the article, the tone of the piece, and any other information which may be important to later interpretation.

One rule to remember. When in doubt about whether or not to code an article or to check a box, err on the side of too much, rather than too little, information. Excess data can always be discarded. But if something important is missed, it is missed forever.

Sample Content Analysis Coding Sheet

Nuclear Power Plant Siting

Paper

Date

Type of Article:
- ( ) Article with News Peg (check one or more)
  - ( ) Notice of upcoming decision, public hearing, meeting, or conference
  - ( ) *Utility* statement made or report of action taken
  - ( ) *Government* statement made or report of action taken
  - ( ) *Citizen or non-government scientist* statement made or report of action taken
  - ( ) Summary of public hearings, public meetings, or conferences
  - ( ) Release and/or summary of a report from any source (which is not required by the siting procedure)
  - ( ) Report of a brownout or blackout
  - ( ) Other news peg
- ( ) Non-news Peg Article: that is, a general information story on nuclear power plants, radiation standards, electric power, etc.
- ( ) Editorial
- ( ) Column (author)
- ( ) Ad (paid for by)
- ( ) Letter

Length:
- ( ) 1-10 col. in.
- ( ) 11-20 col. in.
- ( ) 21-30 col. in.
- ( ) over 30 col. in.

( ) Art (col. x depth)

Ad size (col. x depth)

Location (give page)

Special section page (identify)

Head/Kicker

Dateline, if not local

Credit for news article:
- ( ) Local byline
- ( ) Local no byline
- ( ) Bureau story byline
- ( ) Bureau story no byline
- ( ) Wire service
- ( ) Special service (identify)

ADVERSARY QUESTIONS COVERED IN CODED ARTICLE

A. ( ) Effects of radiation on plant and animal life

B. ( ) Adequacy of radiation protection standards

C. ( ) Possibility of plant accident

D. ( ) Adequacy of insurance (Price-Anderson Act) in case of plant accident

E. ( ) Potential impact of thermal discharge on marine life
F. ( ) Cooling technology
G. ( ) Adequacy of methods for transport and/or disposal of radioactive wastes apart from radioactive plant discharges
H. ( ) Aesthetic arguments on the plant siting
I. ( ) Costs to consumer of the electric power produced by the nuclear power plant
J. ( ) Future availability of nuclear and/or fossil fuels
K. ( ) Any economic impact of the nuclear power plant on the site community, such as change in land values, availability of jobs, etc.
L. ( ) A non-evaluative description of the siting procedure
M. ( ) Attacks or defenses of the siting procedure (involving the AEC, PUC, State Power Plant Siting Committee, government officials, etc.)
N. ( ) Points at which the public can, or has, become involved in the siting procedure
O. ( ) The demand for more electric power in California/U.S.
P. ( ) The effects of increased power consumption for California/U.S.
Q. ( ) The effects of decreased power consumption for California/U.S.
R. ( ) The possibility of developing technologies other than nuclear power to produce electricity
S. ( ) The necessity for a speed-up in the siting procedure for nuclear power plants
T. ( ) The necessity of a slow-down or moratorium in the siting of nuclear power plants
( ) Other issues in the coded article in which adversarity is expressed or implied

In case of editorial, column, or letter, summarize briefly the position taken:

List all individuals, agencies, organizations, businesses, etc. which are not already listed above as information sources, along with the context of the mention, where appropriate (such as a "no comment")

Comments, where coder feels it is appropriate, on the nature of the non-adversary information in the article, or on the general tone and content of the article

Questionnaire on Nuclear Power Plants and the Press

Editor/Newspaper Marginals Plant name
N = 67

( ) Please check here if you would like a copy of the results of this survey.

1. How important a story for your readers do you consider the siting and construction of the above-named nuclear power plant?

71.6 ( ) Very important, meriting large news play
25.4 ( ) Of above-average importance, meriting moderate news play
3.0 ( ) Of some importance, meriting small news play
– ( ) Of slight importance, meriting no news play
– ( ) Other (please specify)

2. Is it the type of story your paper has the facilities (i.e. time, manpower, money, space, etc.) to cover as you would like?

82.1	( )	Yes	
17.9	( )	No	If No, which factors make it difficult to cover?

3. Do you feel that there is another daily in your area better equipped, either because of its location or its resources, to cover this story?

18.8	( )	Yes	If Yes, which daily? N = 69 for this question only
78.2	( )	No	
3.0		No answer	

4. Do you feel that it is the type of story that justifies running a special series of "in depth" articles?

74.6	( )	Yes	(If your paper ran such a series and it would not be too much trouble, we would be most anxious to see some clips.)
22.4	( )	No	
3.0		No answer	

5. Were the reporters who covered the story: (multiple responses permitted)

76.0	( )	General assignment writers
10.4	( )	Business writers
22.4	( )	Science writers
3.0	( )	Political writers
10.4	( )	Other (please specify)
9.0	( )	We did not staff the story ourselves
14.9	( )	Environment writer

6. When in the history of the plant did you begin running stories on utility plans (check one or more)?

20.9	( )	Before land had been purchased for the site
26.8	( )	As soon as the land had been purchased
13.2	( )	When the utility applied for the first permit or license
44.7	( )	When the utility first announced its plans to the public (which may coincide with one of the above)
6.0	( )	Other (please specify)
3.0		No answer

7. Have you or your reporters had difficulty getting complete information from utility officials on siting and construction plans, the environmental impact of the plant, or other aspects of nuclear power?

25.4	( )	Yes	If Yes, please explain:
73.1	( )	No	
1.5		Don't know	

8. In covering the affairs of a private, investor-owned utility (as opposed to a public, municipally-owned utility), do you feel your reporters would be helped by an extension of your state's open record and open meeting laws to cover private utilities?

59.7	( )	Yes
31.3	( )	No
9.0		No answer

9. Would you support such extensions of these laws?

73.1	( )	Yes
9.0	( )	No
17.9		No answer

10. Did your paper take an editorial position on the siting and construction of the nuclear plant?

47.7	( )	Yes	If Yes, what was that position	Pro	78.2
47.7	( )	No		Con	18.7
4.6		No answer		No answer	3.1

11. Did your paper receive any letters-to-the-editor on the subject of the plant?

80.6	( )	Yes	If Yes, a) please estimate the number of letters; and b) indicate if this was a large or small number to have received from your community: a)__________
16.5	( )	No	
3.0		No answer	

b)	Large number Above average number	33.3
	Average number	31.5
	Below average number Small number	31.5
	No answer	3.7

12. Did the utility, plant opponents, or plant supporters use your paper to advertise their feelings on the pros and cons of nuclear power plants?

37.3	( )	Yes	If Yes, which group(s) so advertised?	Both	24.0
55.2	( )	No		Util.	44.0
7.5		No answer		Opp.	12.0
				No answer	20.0

13. How do you think *utility officials* would rate your coverage of the plant?

67.2	( )	Thorough, fair and balanced
10.4	( )	Thin, but fair and balanced
–	( )	Thorough, biased pro-utility
–	( )	Thin, biased pro-utility
13.4	( )	Thorough, biased anti-utility
1.5	( )	Thin, biased anti-utility
3.0	( )	Other (please specify)
4.5		No answer

14. How do you think *opponents of the plant* in your area (if any) would rate your coverage?

50.7	( )	Thorough, fair and balanced
19.4	( )	Thin, but fair and balanced
13.4	( )	Thorough, biased pro-utility
4.5	( )	Thin, biased pro-utility
–	( )	Thorough, biased anti-utility
–	( )	Thin, biased anti-utility
1.5	( )	Other (please specify)
4.5	( )	There were no opponents of the plan in this area
6.0		No answer

15. Do you believe the manner in which you covered this issue had any direct or indirect effect on utility plans for the plant?

26.9 ( ) Yes If Yes, please explain:
67.1 ( ) No
6.0 Don't know

16. What do you think the appropriate role (if any) of one of your citizen-readers should be in the decision-making process on nuclear plants?

Active	38.8
Unclear	20.9
Passive	14.9
No answer	25.4

17. Do you believe a newspaper should develop in its pages the debate over nuclear power (once it becomes known that a plant is to be built in the area), regardless of whether or not there is an organized citizens' effort against it?

70.1 ( ) Yes For either reply, please explain:
17.9 ( ) No
12.0 No answer

18. Additional remarks welcome below or on back:

( ) If you wish your answers to remain anonymous, please check here.

Questionnaire on Nuclear Power Plants and the Press

Utility Marginals Plant Name

( ) Please check here if you would like a copy of the results of this survey.
(N = 37)

1. How important a news story for your customers do you feel your plans were for the siting and construction of the above-named nuclear power plant(s)?

62.2 ( ) Very important, meriting large news play
32.4 ( ) Of above-average importance, meriting moderate news play
5.4 ( ) Of some importance, meriting small news play
– ( ) Of slight importance, meriting no news play
– ( ) Other (please specify)

2. Which daily newspaper (if any) do you feel has the responsibility of reporting your siting and construction plans (check one or more)?

64.8 ( ) The local daily nearest the site, if one exists
56.7 ( ) The metropolitan paper nearest the site
43.2 ( ) The daily in your company's headquarter city
– ( ) No paper
10.8 ( ) Other (please specify)
13.5 Weeklies

3. When in the history of the plant did you make public your plans on location, type of fuel to be used, and the cooling procedure? (Multiple answers permitted)

21.6	( )	Before land had been purchased for the site
43.2	( )	As soon as the land had been purchased
10.8	( )	When we applied for the first permit or license
21.6	( )	Other (please specify)
2.7		No answer

4. How active has the press been in soliciting information from you about the plant and nuclear power?

56.8	( )	Very active
	( )	Active
32.4	( )	Somewhat active
	( )	Not very active
10.8	( )	Passive; that is, we must take the initiative in supplying them with information
–	( )	Other (please specify)

5. Have any newspapers in your area done what you feel to be an excellent job of coverage?

67.5	( )	Yes	If Yes, please name the paper and provide a brief description:
32.5	( )	No	

6. Do you feel existing utility-press relations are adequate to informing the public of your plans?

78.4	( )	Yes	
21.6	( )	No	If No, please explain:

7. Did you advertise your views on nuclear power in the newspaper?

35.1	( )	Yes	If Yes, in which paper(s)?
64.9	( )	No	

8. How would you rate newspaper coverage of the nuclear power plant story in your area?

52.7	( )	Thorough, fair and balanced
23.8	( )	Thin, but fair and balanced
2.3	( )	Thorough, biased pro-utility
2.3	( )	Thin, biased pro-utility
14.3	( )	Thorough, biased anti-utility
2.3	( )	Thin, biased anti-utility
–	( )	Other (please specify)
2.3		No answer

9. Do you believe the manner in which the press covered this issue had any direct or indirect effect on your plans for the plant?

24.3	( )	Yes	If Yes, please explain:
75.7	( )	No	

10. What do you think the appropriate role (if any) of your average electricity customer should be in the decision-making process on nuclear power plants?

None	51.4
Informed	35.1
Active	10.8
No answer	2.7

11. Do you believe that a newspaper should develop in its pages the debate over nuclear power (once it becomes known that a plant is to be built in an area), regardless of whether or not there is an organized citizens' effort against it?

45.9 ( ) Yes For either reply, please explain:
45.9 ( ) No
8.2 No answer

12. Additional remarks welcome below or on back:

( ) If you wish your answers to remain anonymous, please check here.

Questionnaire on Nuclear Power Plants and the Press

Opponent Marginals Plant Name
N = 23

( ) Please check here if you would like a copy of the results of this survey.

1. Which daily newspapers in your area do you read regularly?

2. Which of these papers have run, at fairly regular intervals, articles describing the progress in siting, constructing, and operating the nuclear power plant mentioned above?

3. Have any of the papers run an "in depth" series of articles on nuclear power, explaining the pros and cons in the nuclear debate?

52.1 ( ) Yes If Yes, which ones?
47.9 ( ) No

4. Have the papers provided advance notice of upcoming public meetings, public hearings, utility decisions-to-be-made, etc., so that the public can participate if it so chooses?

73.9 ( ) Yes
26.1 ( ) No If No, please state the circumstances of the omission:
– ( ) Don't know

5. When in the history of the plant did the press begin running stories on utility plans (check one or more)?

13.0 ( ) Before land had been purchased for the site
8.7 ( ) As soon as land had been purchased for the site
21.7 ( ) When the utility applied for the first license or permit
43.4 ( ) When the utility itself first announced its plans (which may coincide with one of the above)
30.4 ( ) Other (please specify)
13.0 ( ) Don't know
13.0 Hearings

6. Have you or your fellow plant opponents had difficulty getting complete information from utility officials on siting and construction plans, the environmental impact of the plant, or other aspects of nuclear power?

82.6 ( ) Yes If Yes, please explain:
17.4 ( ) No

7. Has the press sought out you or your group's spokesman for your views on the plant and nuclear power?

56.5 ( ) Yes
39.1 ( ) No
4.4 No answer

8. Has the argument "for" or the argument "against" construction of the plant been made more fully in the press in your area?

52.1 ( ) Argument "for" the plant
8.7 ( ) Argument "against" the plant
34.8 ( ) Arguments have been presented about equally
4.4 No answer

9. What are the editorial positions on the plant of the papers you read?

Paper	Position
Pro	53.3
Con	3.4
Neutral or none	43.3

10. Do the papers print letters-to-the-editor about the nuclear power plant controversy?

95.6 ( ) Yes If Yes, do they print letters both for and against the plant?
4.4 ( ) No If not, which side predominates?

Equal Numbers	45.4
Unequal Numbers	31.8
No answer	22.8

11. Does the utility *advertise* its position on nuclear power in the press?

65.2 ( ) Yes
30.4 ( ) No
4.4 Don't know

12. Have plant opponents advertised their position on nuclear power in the press?

30.4 ( ) Yes If Yes, as much as the utility?
69.6 ( ) No If No, why not?

Yes	–
No	71.4
No answer	28.6

13. To your knowledge, has the press ever refused to accept an ad expressing opposition to the nuclear power plant, or forced changes in the wording of an ad?

4.4 ( ) Yes If Yes, please state the circumstances:
56.5 ( ) No
39.1 ( ) Don't know

14. How would you rate newspaper coverage in your area of the nuclear power plant debate?

8.7 ( ) Thorough, fair and balanced
21.7 ( ) Thin, but fair and balanced
17.4 ( ) Thorough, biased pro-utility
39.1 ( ) Thin, biased pro-utility
8.7 ( ) Thorough, biased anti-utility
– ( ) Thin, biased anti-utility
4.4 ( ) Other (please specify)

15. Do you believe the manner in which the press covered this issue has had any direct or indirect effect on utility plans for the plant?

56.5	( )	Yes	If Yes, please explain:
39.1	( )	No	
4.4		Don't know	

16. What do you think the appropriate role (if any) of a citizen should be in the decision-making process on nuclear power plants?

Referendum	26.1
Participate in decision-making	21.7
Legal challenges	13.1
Informed	30.4
No answer	8.7

17. Do you believe that a newspaper should develop in its pages the debate over nuclear power (once it becomes known that a plant is to be built in the area), regardless of whether or not there is an organized citizens' effort against it?

91.2	( )	Yes	For either reply, please explain:
8.7	( )	No	

18. In your community, did organized citizen opposition lead to press coverage of the nuclear debate, did initial press coverage lead to formation of citizens' groups, or were the two not related?

Citizen Opposition → Press Coverage	47.8
Press Coverage → Citizen Opposition	4.4
No relationship	30.4
No answer	13.0
No local coverage	4.4

19. Additional remarks welcome below or on back:

( ) If you wish your answers to remain anonymous, please check here.

Appendix VI

THE PRESS AND THE GROWTH ESTABLISHMENT

METHOD OF TELEPHONE SURVEY

Determination of Sample

The survey was based on a census of four homogenous populations and a one-third sampling of a fifth. The sample populations–conservationists, realtors and Chamber of Commerce members–were selected on the basis of their likely concern over the airport and transit issues, their likely high level of information and their likely position on the poles of the conservation-development spectrum. The conservationists in the sample included three groups: the membership list of an organization formed to oppose the expansion of San Jose Airport, Sierra Club members in the Zip Code area nearest the airport's noise problem and Sierra Club members from a Zip Code area far beyond the airport's noise hazard. The realtors and Chamber members were drawn from executive committees with issue orientation–and presumably a stronger time commitment to the organizations.

In the initial design, a sample of manufacturers with plant locations in San Jose had been planned. Pre-test on the sample indicated very little information or concern with the issues. The comparably high level of information among our five populations and the low number of "no opinion" responses is a validation of our sampling procedure–one that is reinforced by the contrast with randomly selected manufacturers (Parten, 1950, p. 492 ff).

Sampling Frame

In each sample, official membership lists were obtained. Names from the lists were subsequently checked against telephone book listings. Only those persons with listed telephone numbers were surveyed. In all but the near-airport Sierra Club list, all persons with listed numbers were surveyed.

Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire was designed to ascertain:

1. The position of the respondents on the airport and transit issues.
2. The most persuasive arguments that brought them to their position.
3. Their level of concern.
4. The local newspaper read most regularly and their assessment of the balance and completeness of coverage of each issue.
5. Other sources of information than the newspaper, and the source deemed "most reliable."

Census tract data indicated that the respondents would largely fall within the upper and middle income brackets. The inclusion of a foothill conservationist sample was another effort to avoid skew in income and education between the conservationist and Chamber sample because past research (Carter, Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 38) indicates that critical assessment of news performance varies directly with income and education level. Income and education were not directly surveyed in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire did, however, seek to account for the effect of the level of concern and the information access of the respondents.

With the exception of "level of concern," the survey questions were open-ended. The approach was mandated by the expected high level of information and concern which would make forced-choice responses restrictive and offensive. The content of the responses indicated that the expectation was warranted, as did the low level of "no opinion" responses.

The pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted on two groups: a small number of public officials with high levels of concern and manufacturers and conservationists living in San Jose's neighboring city, Santa Clara. The modified questionnaire is appended.

Survey Personnel and Training

The survey personnel included three Stanford undergraduates with journalism training (and thus interview experience) and the author. They were equipped with and memorized a set of dummy responses to familiarize themselves with the issue area. Further, training proceeded in two forms: 1) role playing with acting out of cooperative, over-cooperative and hostile respondents and 2) training calls to more Santa Clara respondents using a joint telephone hook-up with rotating interviewers.

The interviewers were instructed to record verbatim responses to the open-ended questions. Using the joint call as an intercoder reliability test, we found substantively identical results from coder to coder. They differed only in the length of verbatim quotes that could be recorded.

Further, coders were instructed to repeat the exact wording or partial phrases from the questions but not to substitute wording or explanation when the respondent asked questions. The questionnaires were administered only to the person appearing on the membership lists. Where Sierra Club member lists included both husband and wife, the survey was administered to the person answering the telephone or the parent which a child chose to call to the phone.

Each respondent was called twice on each of two evenings before being dropped from the sample as "not-at-home." Respondents with not-in-service telephones were dropped from the sample after the first call and a call-back to determine that the number had been dialed correctly (and a directory check).

Survey Analysis

The data were content coded for computer analysis. Coding of issue position responses were made on the basis of key words. The key words were derived from a listing of the responses of ten respondents from each of the membership populations. The key word approach allowed coding the "most persuasive arguments" into three categories: Transportation, Environment, and Growth and Economics, categories implicit in the data.

Coding of the responses on other questions was also accomplished by the same method of category derivation, but key words proved unnecessary for this clerical task.

A Q Sort of the responses was considered but discarded for the lack of expert judges.

The data were coded and key-punched onto computer cards in separate operations to avoid the error involved in combining the two tasks.

Random punching error was checked at the inventory stage: one extra category was discovered and remedied.

Statistical Analysis

Because of the census approach and the homogeneity of populations, Standard Error statistics were not applied to the sub-populations of conservationists, realtors and manufacturers. Both the census approach, proportion of population actually surveyed, and the homogeneity of the sub-populations give us confidence in the representativeness of the results (Parten, 1950, p. 294). Differences *between* groups were tested for significance by Chi Square Test for two or more independent samples (Siegel, 1956, p. 104). Probability values for the Chi Square test are reported with the results. Cell sizes were above the mandatory five for use of the Chi Square test. In one instance, cell sizes were bolstered by collapsing data into a binary configuration.

Final Survey Questionnaire

Group:
Call backs: ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
Complete ( ) Partial ( )
No Response after four calls ( )

Hello Mr. --------. My name is --------. I am calling for a survey being conducted at Stanford University and supported by the National Science Foundation. May we ask about your opinion on two transportation issues affecting people in Santa Clara County?

1) First, we'd like to ask what is your opinion on the proposal to expand San Jose's Municipal Airport?

2) What were the most persuasive arguments that brought you to that conclusion?

3) Now we'd like to ask you to rate how concerned you are about the outcome of the controversy. Would you say you are: 1) Very Concerned 2) Moderately Concerned or 3) Not concerned about this particular issue?

4) What *local* newspaper do you read most regularly?

5) Would you say their news reporting about airport plans has been balanced in the sense that their news reports don't try to sway the reader to take one viewpoint over another?

6) Has their news on airport expansion been complete in the sense that you feel they give an adequate understanding of the pros and cons of airport plans?

7) Have you gotten information about airport expansion from any place or anybody besides your newspaper? (If just "yes," ask who or where?)

8) To what person, organization or publication would you or do you look for the most reliable information about the airport issue?

9) Now I'd like to turn to the question of high-speed public transit. What is your position on public transit for Santa Clara County?

10) What were the most persuasive arguments that brought you to that conclusion?

11) Would you say you are: 1) Very concerned, 2) Moderately concerned or 3) Not concerned about the particular issue of transit?

12) Would you say your newspaper's reporting about transit has been complete in the sense that you feel they give an adequate understanding of the pros and cons of the issue?

13) Has your newspaper's news been balanced in the sense that their reporting doesn't try to sway a reader to take one viewpoint over another?

14) Have you gotten information about public transit from any place or anybody besides your newspaper?

15) To what person, organization or publication would you or do you look for the most reliable information on the transit issue?

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METHOD FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

In our earlier discussion of press responsibility, we offered broad-brush criteria for newspaper quality—quality criteria that emphasized information which allows the citizen to perform the role of intelligent judgment in matters of public policy.

We urge standards of quality which mandate that newspaper content offer:

1. An understanding of the costs and benefits of public policy before policy decisions are made.
2. An understanding of the alternatives to any particular policy.
3. An understanding of the weaknesses of any proposed policy.
4. Evenhandedness in the presentation of the positions of proponents and opponents of particular policies.

These criteria can be operationalized only in the context of a specific issue. At the same time the researcher must avoid a subjective judgment of what constitutes "understanding" or of what or how much content fulfills each criteria. Our resolution of this problem—through a twist on the use of expert judges—will become apparent as we describe the operationalized content coding categories for the news and editorial coverage of airport and transit development.

Content Analysis of News and Editorial Content on Airport Siting

The first quality criterion requires that a newspaper offer an understanding of the costs and benefits of airport siting and development. The notion of relevant content was derived from the planning process itself. Airport location and development was the subject of study by the Airport Subcommittee of the Santa Clara

County Planning Policy Committee. The subcommittee was commissioned to study the pros and cons of airport plans. Its membership included representatives of the county's cities, a homeowners' association, the Sierra Club, the San Jose Airport Commission, the County Planning Department and the Chamber of Commerce. Its mandate and membership provided confidence that it thoroughly examined the pros and cons of airport location and development.

Content codes derived from the study categories of the Subcommittee were used as an inclusive description of news coverage that offers an understanding of the costs and benefits of airport plans. The study categories developed by the committee offer a convenient and reasonably "objective" instrument to test for the presence or absence of themes in news coverage across time. Further, the modification permitted an examination of the detail in which themes were presented. No arbitrary level of "sufficiency" or "excellence" was applied. The presence of content in the theme categories was considered desirable.

Thus the categories sought a descriptive portrait of the presence and volume of news in the following content areas:

1. The economic impact of increased air services in Santa Clara Valley
   a. Direct employment by the facility
   b. Effect on the growth rate of economy and employment in the Valley at large
   c. Effect on land and property values
2. The environmental impact of increased air services in Santa Clara Valley
   a. Noise pollution
   b. Air pollution
   c. Water pollution
   d. Population growth treated as an environmental hazard
   e. Land use patterns

The second criterion requires that newspapers offer an understanding of the alternatives to any particular policy. Again the hearings of the Planning Policy Committee and the positions of planning experts were drawn on in outlining specific content themes which offer policy alternatives.

An understanding of alternatives is operationally defined as content in the following theme areas:

1. Ground transit connection to San Francisco or Oakland airports.
2. Siting of an airport on the periphery of the metropolitan area beyond population concentration.
3. Introduction of STOL or VTOL or other aircraft technology to alleviate pressures for airport expansion.
4. Rescheduling to prevent empty-plane flights and peak-hour congestion.
5. Communication substitutes for air travel such as computer conferencing or data exchange.
6. Segregation of general aviation (private planes) to alleviate airport congestion.
7. Civilian and commercial use of the naval air facilities at Moffett Field.

Once again, in analyzing the data, a descriptive portrait of coverage was sought. While the presence of alternatives is considered desirable, no arbitrary level of "sufficiency" was designated.

The third criterion of quality requires that the newspaper offer information which probes the weaknesses of public policy. In this instance, content codes were derived from the provisions of the 1970 Federal

Airport Development and Revenue Act. The newspaper's adversary function would be evidenced by offering content which indicated local airport plans would involve actions which are prohibited by the federal law:

1. Adverse effect upon fish and wildlife
2. Adverse effect upon natural, scenic and recreational assets
3. Adverse effect upon water and air quality
4. Adverse effect upon the interest of communities in or near which the project may be located is expressed officially
5. Undue delay in completion of the project once it is under way
6. Inconsistency with the plans of planning agencies for development of the area
7. Sufficient funds are unavailable for that portion of project which are not to be paid by the federal government.

Once again, no arbitrary level of sufficiency is applied.

A fourth criterion of quality requires that the newspaper be evenhanded and fair in the presentation of the pros and cons of airport news. Rather than undertake a semantic analysis of questionable reliability, independent samples of conservationists, realtors and Chamber of Commerce members were surveyed—a purposive sample of the environmental and growth establishments. Researchers asked: "Has your newspaper's reporting about airport plans been balanced in the sense that their news reports don't try to sway the reader to take one viewpoint over another?" and "Has their news on the airport been complete in the sense that you feel they give an adequate understanding of the pros and cons of airport plans?"

It would be concluded that the newspaper systematically served only certain community interests if conservationists were more critical of news performance than realtors or Chamber members. The likelihood of real bias existing where bias is perceived is discussed earlier in the appendix.

The unlikelihood of a newspaper realizing these quality standards without probing and initiative reporting is obvious. The level of political intelligence required of the newspaper is simply not contained in the direct transmission of the proceedings of public meetings. Understanding lies in the presentation of the public and private values, goals and possibilities, the political influences and the conflicting interests which inform and shape public policy decisions. These, we maintain, can only be probed and monitored by a newspaper which frees its staff for initiative and investigative reporting.

With this belief, researchers recorded the number and percentage of stories on airport plans which contained no "hard news" peg. Once again no arbitrary level of sufficiency or excellence was imposed.

Cumulatively, the measures offer a descriptive portrait and reader assessment of news performance within prescriptive categories.

The first three criteria of quality were applied to editorials as well as news, offering a descriptive portrait of editorial comment as well as news content.

Content Analysis of News and Editorial Treatment of Transit Policy in Santa Clara County

In developing categories for analysis of transit content an attempt was made to maintain parallelism with the content analysis of airport development. To some degree that was impossible. The transit controversy ended—not permanently but in the study period—with a county-wide public vote; the airport issue was concluded by vote of the San Jose City Council.

Nevertheless, the four quality standards can be adapted to the transit issue.

The first quality criterion requires that a newspaper offer an understanding of the costs and benefits of creating a countywide transit district with bonding and tax powers which would allow it to operate bus transit and to investigate high-speed, fixed-rail transit. Parallel to the airport codes and derived from the County Planning Department Transportation Planning Study of 1969, the content coding categories sought a portrait of the presence and volume of news and comment in the following categories:

1. The impact of transit service upon the economy and employment levels of Santa Clara Valley
    a. Direct employment by the transit system
    b. Multiplier effect of transit service upon rate of growth in Valley's economy and employment
    c. The costs of developing and operating the system
    d. Effects on land and property values
2. The environmental impact of the development of transit service in Santa Clara Valley
    a. Air pollution
    b. Water pollution
    c. Noise pollution
    d. Population growth treated as an environmental hazard
    e. Land use
3. The social impact of transit service in Santa Clara Valley
    a. Mobility for low-income people
    b. Mobility for youth and aged
    c. Displacement of low-income residents due to condemnation or rising property values
    d. Promotion of contact during travel
    e. Lowering of frustration and waste time due to congestion
    f. Creation of a sense of place by development of a pedestrian scale in downtown renewal

Information content in the theme areas was considered desirable, but no level of sufficiency was imposed.

The second criterion of quality requires that the newspaper offer an understanding of alternatives to the development of transit service. Borrowing from the arguments of transit opponents and planning experts, the following categories were derived which are an operationalization of "an understanding of alternatives":

1. Development of peripheral or bypass freeway systems.
2. Buses with exclusive right-of-ways.
3. Public subsidy or other means of improving Southern Pacific commuter system.
4. Ban on private autos in downtown area.
5. Ban on or massive improvement in internal combustion engine.
6. Express laning of freeways.
7. Computer control of car-to-car distances, speed and access to freeways.

In effect, the presentation of alternatives is an adversary function. A second measure of adversarity is incorporated in the third criterion of quality—that the newspaper offer an understanding of the weaknesses of the transit proposition. News and comment were analyzed for the following themes:

1. The proportionally small representation of San Jose on the transit district board compared to its 40 percent share of county population.
2. The displacement of low-income families due to condemnation, routing, redevelopment or rising land values.
3. The displacement of other land uses by condemnation, routing or right-of-ways
4. Car owners may not use transit thereby failing to relieve congestion or pollution
5. Car owners may not use transit thereby creating a large financial burden.
6. Transit would spur density and crowding.
7. Transit would orient the community toward San Francisco, inhibiting the development of local possibilities.
8. Scatterization of population prohibits effective or profitable transit operation.
9. Transit has had financial failures elsewhere.

Once again, no specific level of sufficiency was designated.

The fourth criterion of quality requires that the newspaper be fair and evenhanded in the presentation of the arguments of the proponents and opponents of transit coverage. As in the airport issue, both ends of the conservation and development spectrum were polled to determine their assessment of the balance and completeness of transit coverage.

As in the airport issue, it was also determined the proportion of coverage which displayed staff initiative or investigation as opposed to the reporting of event-pegged stories.

The cumulative effect of the coding categories permitted a description of the thoroughness of news coverage and editorial comment. It also provides a description of the presence and volume of content themes which afford the reader the understanding with which to make intelligent (or unintelligent) assessments of public policy decisions. Furthermore, the frequency with which stories and editorials deal with 1) environmental themes, 2) adversary themes, and 3) policy alternatives permit a comparison of the treatment of the transit and airport issues. If the newspaper were serving its economic interest, it is predicted that

1. There would be a higher proportion of stories dealing with the environmental impact of transit.
2. There would be an absence of adversary themes and policy alternatives offered in the treatment of both issues.

The hypotheses apply to the metropolitan daily we have examined—the San Jose *Mercury* with its dependence on the continued health of regional advertising accounts and its hope to attract national ad contracts. The sub-community press is less dependent on the health of regional retailers and more so on the vitality of neighborhood shopping centers. Thus, news and comment in the weekly San Jose *Sun*, with its localized editions, were examined. The frequency of 1) environmental themes, 2) adversary themes, and 3) policy alternatives in the *Sun* was compared to the *Mercury*. The two papers' treatment of the transit and airport issues amount to a control on the comparability of the two issues. Discrepancies between the two papers in the coverage of identical events were examined within the context of our coding categories.

The economic interests of the two papers—the metro paper's orientation to the CBD, the sub-community paper to the neighborhood—suggest the predicted direction of discrepancies.

The sampling frame is discussed in the body of the text. The coding sheets and marginals follow:

Adversary and Alternative Policy Themes Mentioned: The Airport Issue

Alternative Themes:	Number of stories in April and May, 1970 in which theme appears (N is 11)	Number of editorials in 1969 and 1970 in which theme appears (N is 5)	Number of stories in April and May, 1970, in which theme appears (N is 11)	Number of editorials in 1969 and 1970 in which theme appears (N is 12)
Ground transit connection to San Francisco or Oakland Airports	0	0	1	0
Location of airport on urban periphery with transit link to downtown	0	0	2	5
STOL, VTOL or other new aircraft technology	0	0	0	5
Ground transit as a substitute for interstate air service	1	0	2	2
Rescheduling to prevent empty-plane flights or peak-hour congestion	0	0	0	1
Use of Moffett Field	0	0	1	1
Relocation of general aviation activity	0	0	1	4
Adversary Themes:				
Adverse effect on fish and wildlife	1	0	5	1
Adverse effect on natural, scenic and recreational assets	1	0	5	3
Adverse effect on water and air quality	2	0	2	5
Expression of opposition on official behalf of nearby communities	1	0	0	1
Inconsistency with the plans of planning agencies for development of an area	0	0	0	3

Adversary and Alternative Policy Themes Mentioned: The Transit Issue

	Mercury		*Sun*	
Alternative Themes:	Number of stories in month prior to transit district elections of 1969 and 1970 in which theme appears (N is 73)	Number of editorials in 1969 and 1970 in which theme appears (N is 52)	Number of stories in month prior to transit elections of 1969 and 1970 (N is 15)	Number of editorials in 1969 and 1970 in which theme appears (N is 13)
Development of peripheral or bypass freeways	0	0	0	0
Improvement in Southern Pacific system	0	0	0	0
Ban on private cars in downtown areas	0	0	0	0
Ban on internal combustion engine/replacement of polluting engines	0	1	0	0
Computer control of car speed, freeway access, car-to-car distances	0	0	0	0
Express-laning of freeways	0	0	0	0
Adversary Themes:				
Displacement of low-income families by condemnation, routing, or rising land values	0	0	0	0
Car owners may not use transit, hence system might fail to relieve congestion or pollution	0	0	0	0
Car owners may not use transit, hence system might lose money and raise taxes	1	0	0	0
Scatterization and sprawl may prohibit effective or profitable development of transit	0	1	0	0
Transit troubles, financial and other, in other cities	1	0	0	0

TRANSIT CONTENT THEMES

ME = *Mercury* editorials
MN = *Mercury* news stories
SN = *Sun* news stories
SE = *Sun* editorials

Numbers refer to the number of stories in which the theme appears during the period of analysis.

Economic impact of increased transit service in the Santa Clara Valley

ME	MN	SN	SE	
				( ) Health or ( ) Drag for economy and employment
20	8	7	7	( ) Cost of developing or operating system
3	5	2	1	( ) Cost specified
4	1	0	0	( ) Revenue from facility or likely deficit
19	39	5	6	( ) Means of paying for transit
4	11	2	0	( ) Federal funds
11	22	5	3	( ) Direct taxes/sales tax
7	17	0	4	( ) Gas tax diversion
0	3	0	0	( ) General fund or bonds
0	0	0	0	( ) Direct employment by transit system
1	0	1	0	( ) Multiplier effect of transit service upon economic growth or employment in the county
0	0	0	0	( ) Industrial sector
0	0	0	0	( ) Commerce
0	0	0	0	( ) Regional headquarters location
0	0	0	0	( ) Central Business District development
0	0	0	0	( ) Other transportation services
0	0	0	0	( ) Government
0	0	0	0	( ) Agriculture
0	0	0	0	( ) Culture, recreation, nightlife, sports, conventions
0	0	0	1	( ) Effect on land and property values
0	0	0	0	( ) Effect on tax base
0	0	0	0	( ) Effect on tax rate
7	2	1	3	( ) Effect on profitability or savings due to transportation efficiency for people or firms who can use cheaper transportation or less congested highways
0	0	0	0	( ) Effect on productivity due to less congestion frustration
				Environmental Impact
15	16	5	6	( ) Air pollution
1	1	0	0	( ) Levels of air pollution (present or projected) specified
0	0	0	0	( ) Differential between car pollution and transit specified in terms of volumes or %'s.

ME	MN	SN	SE	
0	0	0	0	( ) Levels or projections of auto-use treated as a pollution hazard
0	0	0	0	( ) Pollution standards mentioned
0	0	0	0	( ) How pollution affects man or biota specified
0	0	0	0	( ) Water pollution
2	2	0	0	( ) Noise pollution
				( ) Transit compared to cars or freeways
0	0	0	0	( ) Population growth treated as an environmental hazard
0	0	0	0	( ) Transit as a population magnet or spur to population growth
0	0	0	0	( ) Psycho-social effects of population density or sprawl
0	0	0	0	( ) Environmental hazards (air pollution, water pollution, waste disposal, biota strain) of population concentration
1	1	0	2	( ) Land use ramifications of implemented transit service
1	1	0	1	( ) Compatibility of likely routes with existing land uses
0	0	0	0	( ) Residential
0	0	0	0	( ) Low-income residential
0	0	0	0	( ) Industry
0	0	0	0	( ) Park, recreation, wildlife, Marina, Open-space
0	0	0	0	( ) Freeways, highways, streets, rail routes
0	0	0	0	( ) Effects on land use pattern or 1) Auto replacement or 2) Growth that is spurred by availability of transit service
0	0	0	0	( ) Density, sprawl, or mix of future development
0	0	0	0	( ) Comparison of likely car-oriented versus transit-oriented patterns
0	0	0	0	( ) Corridors of dense development
0	0	0	0	( ) Poles or centers of dense development
0	0	0	0	( ) Displacement of low-income families due to renewal, rising land values, downtown redevelopment, etc.
0	0	0	0	( ) Effects on rate of future land development for
0	0	0	0	( ) Industry
0	0	0	0	( ) Housing
0	0	0	0	( ) Commerce
0	0	0	0	( ) Park, recreation, open-space
0	0	0	0	( ) Baylands
0	0	0	0	( ) Culture, sports, nightlife
0	0	0	0	( ) Agriculture
				Social impact of increased transit services in Santa Clara Valley
3	0	2	3	( ) Mobility for people now lacking it
0	0	0	1	( ) Mobility for low-income families
1	0	0	1	( ) Mobility for youth or aged

ME	MN	SN	SE			
2	0	0	1	( ) Promotion of human contact, lessening of tension during travel		
0	0	0	0	( ) Creation of a sense of place or community identity in downtown		

AIRPORT CONTENT THEMES

ME	MN	SN	SE			
				Economic Impact of increased air services in Santa Clara Valley		
1	1	1	3	( ) Growth or health for economy and employment		
0	1	0	0		( ) Direct employment by facility	
1	0	0	1		( ) Revenue from facility	
0	0	0	1			( ) Revenue from present airport
						( ) Future projections
0	1	1	1		( ) Effect of air services upon growth rate of Valley	
0	1	1	0			( ) Industrial sector
0	0	1	0			( ) Trade, business, commerce
0	0	1	0			( ) Transportation sector
0	0	0	0			( ) Government services sector
0	0	0	0			( ) Agricultural sector
0	0	0	0		( ) Effect on land and property values	
				Environmental impact of increased air services in Santa Clara Valley		
1	3	4	9	( ) Noise pollution		
0	1	1	4		( ) Site would be noise incompatible with other uses (must specify noise)	
0	1	1	3			( ) Residential
0	0	0	0			( ) Industrial
0	0	1	0			( ) Park, recreation, wilderness, wildlife
0	0	0	1			( ) Hospital
0	0	0	1			( ) Commercial
0	0	0	0		( ) Level of noise specified in decibels	
0	0	0	0		( ) Noise standards mentioned	
0	0	0	0		( ) How noise psychologically or physiologically affects man or biota	
1	1	1	1		( ) Noise suppression	
0	0	0	0			( ) Thru land-use controls, zoning, purchase
0	0	0	0			( ) Thru engine retro-fitting (mufflers)
1	0	0	1			( ) Suppression thru modification of take-off and landing angles
						( ) Suppression thru baffling of ground structures
0	0	0	1			( ) Redesign of jet aircraft engines (not muffling)
0	2	2	5	( ) Air pollution		
					( ) Levels of pollution specified	
					( ) Pollution standards mentioned	

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ME	MN	SN	SE				
0	1	1	0		( ) How pollution affects man or biota		
0	0	1	0		( ) Suppression thru source control		
0	0	0	0			( ) Mention of cost or effectiveness	
0	0	0	0	( ) Water pollution			
0	0	0	0		( ) Levels of pollution specified		
0	0	0	0		( ) Pollution standards mentioned		
0	0	0	0		( ) How water pollution affects man or biota		
0	1	2	5	( ) Population growth treated as an environmental hazard (i.e., as undesirable crowding or concentration or environmental stress)			
0	0	2	0		( ) Airport expansion as a population magnet or spur to population growth		
						( ) Psycho-social effects of density or scatter of population	
0	0	2	0			( ) How population concentration affects environment (pollution, waste, biota strain)	
0	1	5	5	( ) Land use			
0	1	5	4		( ) Compatibility of particular site with existing land uses		
0	0	2	1			( ) Residential	
0	0	0	2			( ) Industrial	
0	0	4	0			( ) Park, recreation, wildlife, marina, open space	
0	0	0	2			( ) Commercial	
						( ) Hospital	
0	0	0	1			( ) Transportation/highways/freeways	
						( ) Utilities, sewage, water mains	
0	1	1	0		( ) Effects on land use patterns of growth spurred by increasing air services		
0	0	0	0			( ) Density or mix of future development	
0	1	1	0			( ) Effects on rate of future land development	
0	1	0	0				( ) Industrial
0	0	0	0				( ) Commercial
0	1	1	0				( ) Residential
0	1	0	0				( ) Park, recreation, open-space
0	0	0	0				( ) Agriculture